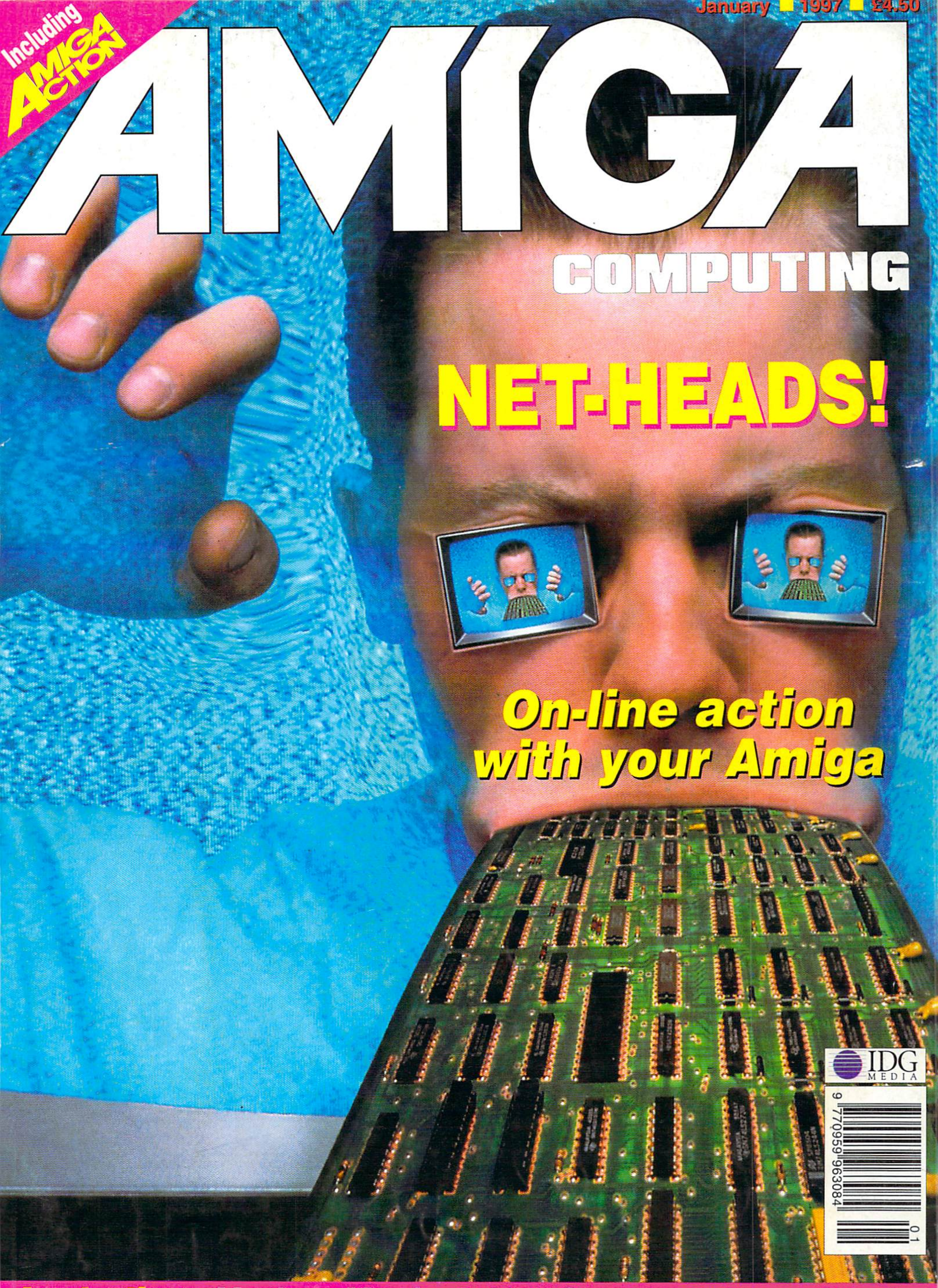
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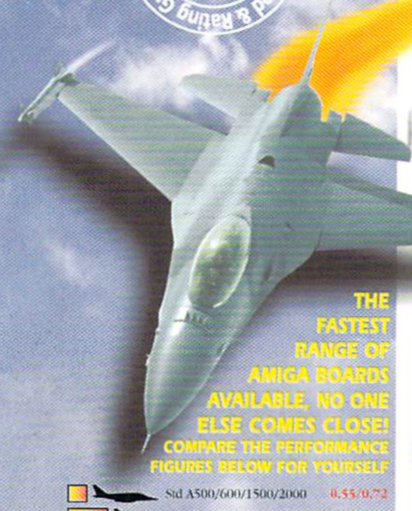
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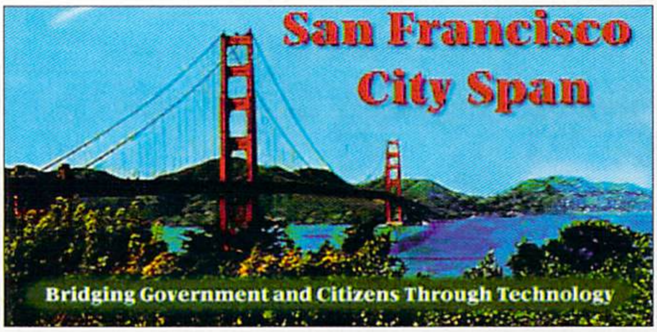
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amiga comment

The stunning Golden Gate bridge – yes, you guessed it – on the Internet

World Wide Wondering

Tina Hackett worries that all the **cyber-theorising** will put off potential users

If you're going to San Francisco...don't forget your Web address. It's not quite the same as wearing flowers in your hair, but that is the latest trend hitting California as I discovered on a recent trip out there.

Now, having led a somewhat sheltered life in a Cheshire village where if you mentioned http or WWW you'd be looked at as if you'd just swapped your tractor for a VW Golf, it came as somewhat of a shock to find that over in the States, Web addresses are as common as telephone numbers.

It's quite a strange phenomenon. I visited Haight Ashbury – renowned '60s centre of the peace movement and home to Flower Power. Gone are the hedonistic days of chilled out hippies – they've all swapped their underground zines for computers and electronic mail.

Shops selling weird and wonderful hippy items now boast an on-line presence which they proudly advertise across their doorways. You can even find The Haight Ashbury Free Press on-line (http://www.webcom.com/haight/) which brings you the latest news from the Haight Ashbury Underground.

Further inland is Yosemite which has the tallest waterfall in the USA and some of the most spectacular scenery to be seen. Oh yes, it also has a Web address (http://www.yosemite.com). Then, of course, there are all the bars, tourist attractions and newspapers on-line.

Whether this is something unique to California, I don't honestly know. There's a lot of talk of The Californian Ideology (see http://www.wmin.ac.uk/media/HRC/ci/calif5.html) – which puts it down to the "cultural bohemianism of San Francisco with the hi-tech industries of Silicon Valley".

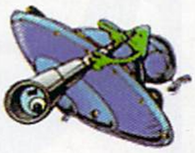
Whatever it is, it's obvious that the UK is way behind in terms of accepting that the information superhighway is here to stay and that it is more than just an empty buzzword.

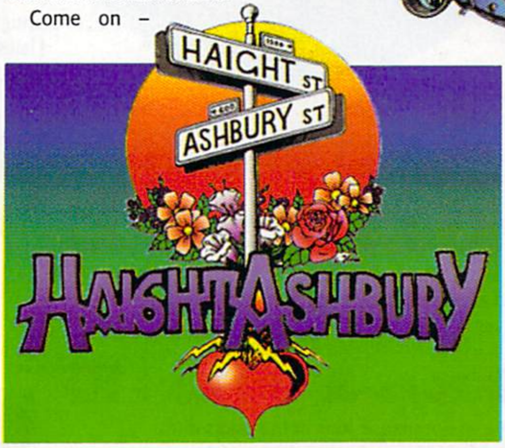
However, perhaps we Brits shouldn't set out to imitate the Californians too closely. There are many so-called Web philosophers out there who could actually harm the Internet before it even starts – they go beyond just accepting the Internet as a useful tool of modern life. In fact, they believe its impact to be so great, that they are determined to theorise the whole concept to death. The result of this cybergibberish could be that many people who are just starting to learn about the Internet could be put off for life.

Okay, fair enough. It would be irresponsible for us to plough on without giving any thought to the implications of the technology we are using. But who wants to hear about *cyberlibertarians* and *digital utopia*? Do we really believe that people's brains will eventually be connected into one big computer or other such nonsense as some of the US gurus are predicting?

I'm not denying that there aren't social and political considerations relevant to Cyberspace. However, the net is often criticised for secluding many sections of society – we could end up isolating many more people who actually want to get connected with the pretentious hyperbole that is so fashionable.

Come on – the Internet is not some Gibson-esque nightmare. Treat it for what it is – a useful medium for getting information from all around the world on a diversity of topics. It has its faults – overcrowding on-line, slow downloads and a fair share of home pages with nothing but rubbish on them.





A sign of the times – one of the Haight Ashbury Web sites

At the stage it's at now, it's not going to threaten mankind as we know it. In some respects we should learn from the States in that many people have turned the Net into something useful (where would have I been without the on-line guides I printed off before my trip to America?) but we really do need to get things into perspective.

Tina Hackett

Tina Hackett, *Editor*

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EMail contacts:
Editorial edit@acomp.demon.co.uk
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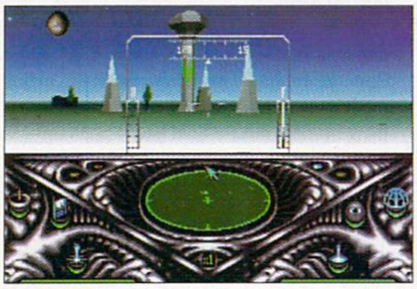
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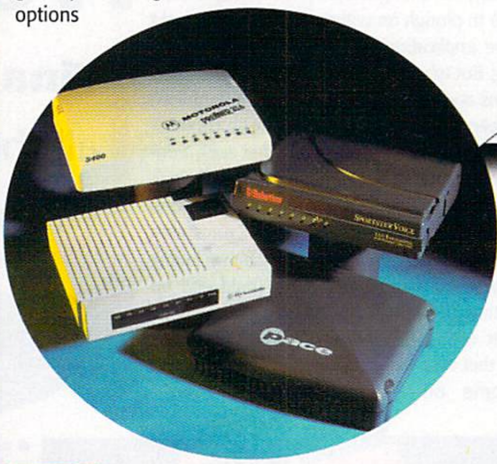


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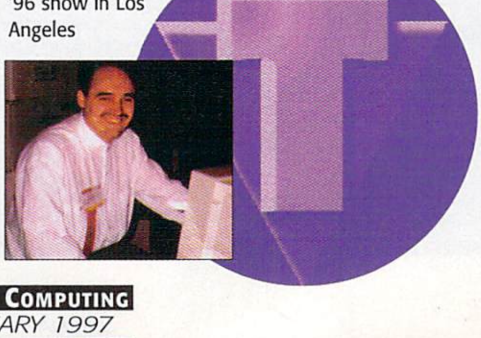
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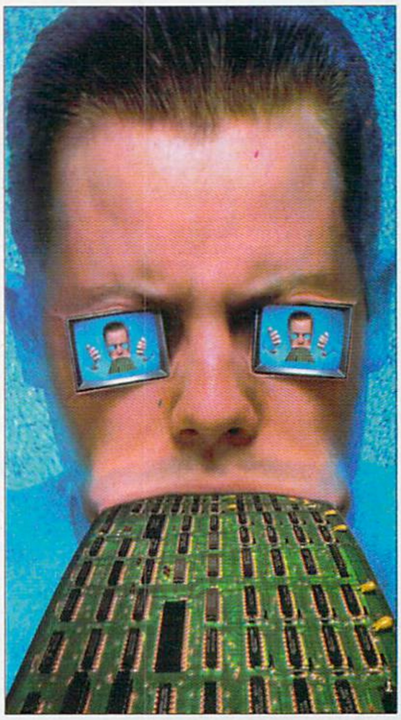




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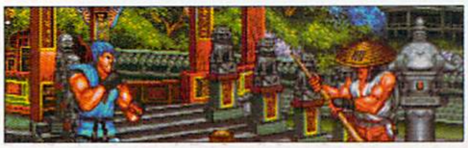
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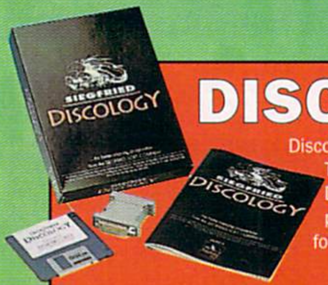
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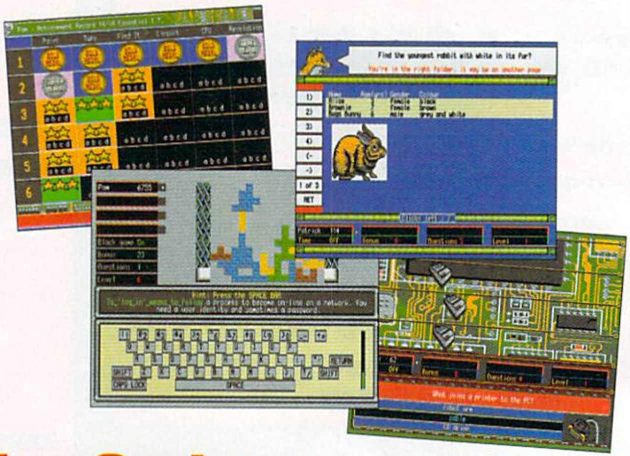


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As a reader of Amiga Computing, the biggest Amiga Magazine in the world, you are entitled to a fully working, boxed copy of Essential I.T. worth £14.99, free of charge. In fact all you have to do to guarantee your copy is cover the cost of postage and packing.

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FREE SOFTWARE!

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To secure your copy of Essential I.T. simply fill in the form below and post it to: ***Amiga Computing, 10 out of 10 Offer, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 4NP***

This voucher entitles me to one free copy of Essential I.T. (rrp £14.99). I understand that in order to receive my copy I have to cover the £1.95 cost of postage and packing.

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10 out of 10 AMIGA COMPUTING

voucher

The ultimate high speed CD-ROM drive for the Amiga A1200

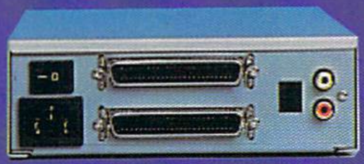
ULTRA CD ROM DRIVE

NEW



JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THESE SPECIFICATIONS AND AMAZING LOW PRICES!

- Fully featured external CD-ROM drive mounted in a top quality metal enclosure with its own built in power supply.
- Audio output connectors enable you to use the drive as an audio CD player.
- Easy fit internally fitting interface simply plugs in to ensure full compatibility with all accelerators, memory expansions etc.
- Does not use or interfere with the PCMCIA slot or any other port.
- Includes CD-ROM installation software.
- CD32 Emulation enables the majority of CD32 titles to be used on the A1200.
- Audio CD player software allows you to play your audio CDs.
- Unlike most other CD ROM drive systems the Ultra CD ROM drive does not cause long delays when booting up.



The interface simply plugs onto the 44 pin IDE connector inside the computer (still allows a 2.5" or 3.5" internal hard drive to be used as well!) and provides a connector in the blanking plate at the rear of the A1200 next to the mouse socket. This can be installed by anyone in 5 minutes!

All cables, instructions, interface, etc., included as well as a 12 month warranty and full technical support.

NEW LOWER PRICE

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From the M62 Junction 17 head towards Bury. We are 50 yards on the right hand side after the third set of lights. The door to our premises is next to the florists opposite the Masons Pub.

All prices include VAT. Postage and packing will be charged at £3.50 per order (U.K.), £7.50 Europe and £12.50 rest of the world.

news

By Tina Hackett & Hugh Poynton

Digita launch new Amiga range

Digita have announced four new Amiga products



Digita International have released four new Amiga packages, including the world's first CD word processor. Wordsworth 6, Wordsworth 6 Office, TurboCalc 4 and Personal Paint 7 are all available on CD Rom or floppy disk. Prices start at £39.99, with the recent version of Wordsworth 6 Office at £49.99. The latest incarnation of Wordsworth includes new drawing tools, more ARexx commands, password protection of documents, watermarks, 50 Compugraphic fonts and over 1,000 pieces of clipart.

For further details e-mail Digita at: info@digita.demon.co.uk

GTI Chart Toppers

GTI, the mail order Amiga software specialists have just released their product charts for October 1996. Topping the Amiga Productivity top ten is the English version of I-Browse, followed by Turbo Print Prof 4.1 and Asim CDFS 3x. The tools and utilities compilation Aminet 14 proves to be the most popular CD Rom, while Hugo and Killing Grounds are the best selling games.

Puffins At School

Puffin Books have established the first children's books web site intended for use in the class room and at home. The Puffin House will contain educational but fun material about Puffin's best-selling authors and books.

Big Brother Is Watching You

A new survey conducted by UW Software has revealed figures that suggest company employees could be abusing the Internet in the workplace. The survey could be worrying for IT managers and departmental managers, it has found that:

- 65% of respondents believed that at least a quarter of employee time spent accessing the Internet was not productive
- 75% admitted they had no way of identifying which sites were visited by company employees
- 62% willing to express an opinion believed that 'personal browsing' was a major time waster on the Internet
- 74% felt that departmental managers were more concerned with Internet abuse than the IT manager.

The survey was carried out to coincide with the launch of UWwebmon – a device designed by UW Software to monitor which sites were being visited by which employees.

Businesses look at the value of the Net

Another survey, this one conducted among London businesses, yielded surprising results. New research from CENTEC (Central London Training and Enterprise Council) has revealed that only 22% of central London businesses have Internet access, and only 8% think that connection to the Internet could improve business efficiency.

Even more surprising is the fact that a third of central London businesses didn't use computer systems at all. The use of computers and the Internet seems to depend largely on the size of the company in question.

Among firms employing fewer than 10 people, only 40% used computer systems. Larger firms showed a much greater dependence on information technology. Sector also influences the use of computers in business with small retailing and hotel catering being the most likely to computerless.

Typical of many businessmen's attitudes are those displayed by Richard Williams, managing director of Anthorp Ltd: 'The jury's still out on the Internet as far as I'm concerned. I haven't had much opportunity to look at it myself but it just seems like a waste of time. I can't imagine it has anything that would be beneficial to us.'

Blittersoft Bargains

Blittersoft, licensed manufacturers of Amiga computers announced a reduction in the prices of a selection of their machines. Prices range from £1,995.95 for an Eagle (Amiga) 4000TE/60 50 MHz to £599.95 for an Eagle (Amiga) 1200TE. Blittersoft also sell the full Phase 5 range with prices ranging from £34.95 for CyberGraphx Software to £529.95 for Cyberstorm Mk II 060/50.

For further details contact Blittersoft on 01908 261466

WEB SKIERS?

The Ski and Snowboard Show, held at Olympia on October 25 saw the launch of the most comprehensive UK web site for skiers. The site, ski.co.uk, contains all the relevant information that might be needed by ski fanatics, such as up to the minute reports on piste conditions and reports of skiing events across the world. The web site includes information on the latest holiday bargains, on-line brochures and guides as to the best ski equipment.

Matthew Hare, managing director of CommUnity, the Oxford based web authoring house that built ski.co.uk, commented, 'The Internet has thousands of ski related sites and ski.co.uk pulls together everything of interest to UK skiers making it easy for them to find what they are looking for.'

For more information, access the site at www.ski.co.uk

Ski fans are well catered for here



WHICH? ON THE WEB

Which?, the biggest national consumer magazine, went online on October 31. The consumer online service will enable subscribers access to all the magazines and books from the well respected Which? stable as well as offering them the ability to talk directly to Which? Online about a wide range of consumer issues. Using the service will enable customers to investigate potential purchases or find out about health or money matters.

Which? Online will be available for £14.75 including VAT, however for those who already have an Internet connection the site will be available at £7.95 a month including VAT.

MILLENNIUM BID FOR FREE PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS

If a new bid by the Information For All group for Millennium Commission funding proves successful, everyone could soon have free access to the Internet at their local public libraries.

The scheme aims to allow everyone, regardless of income or location an opportunity to share in the benefits of the Information Superhighway. If the scheme succeeds in its objectives people will be able to use the communications networks to gain access to learning resources no matter how far away, improve their ability to seek jobs and develop modern IT skills such as word processing.

As Sir Charles Chadwyck-Healy, chairman of the group comments, 'At the moment only a privileged minority have access to computers, and even fewer to on-line information. Connecting everyone through their public library is surely the best way to bridge the gap between the information rich and the information poor. This has already been recognised in the Pacific Rim and the USA where citizens' access to worldwide information is seen as a key component of economic competitiveness.'

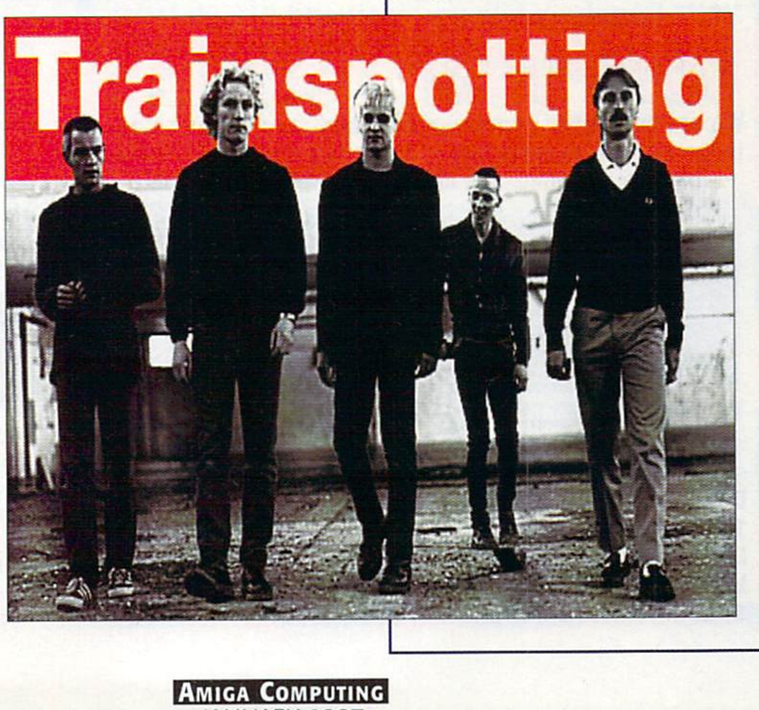
For further information either go to your local library or have a look at Information For All's web site at http://www.ukukoln.ac.uk./informall

A SPOT OF INTERSPOTTING...

Polygram video has just launched its official Trainspotting website following the exceptional success of the movie. Launched on November 4, the site features movie clips, sound bites and pictures to download. Also included on the site are interviews with the author of the book, and writer of the screenplay, Irvine Welsh and director, Danny Boyle. The site also includes information about the Calton Athletic Recovery Group who acted as technical advisors on the film.

The address of the Trainspotting site is http://www.trainspotting.co.uk

Fans of Trainspotting can check out the latest at http://www.trainspotting.co.uk



WIRED COPS

Netcom, the leading Internet service providers are to hold training courses to help CID officers from the Bracknell Police Force become acquainted with the Internet.

The courses are intended to educate the police officers as to the workings of the Internet so they can attempt to combat its use for illicit purposes. Combating Internet crime is at present difficult because Police Officers have very little personal experience of the Internet to draw from.

The training courses will cover topics such as e-mail, FTP file transfer, IRC chat and newsgroups. Netcom views the training courses as the natural follow-on to the introduction of their 24 hour Internet Advice Line for Parents.

"Increasingly, our officers are finding themselves dealing with issues or complaints involving the Internet, often with little or no personal experience to help them. Insights gained from an Internet specialist like Netcom, coupled with some hands-on experience of how to navigate the Information Superhighway, provides a greater opportunity for us to learn how to detect and deal with abuses more efficiently and effectively than before" commented DI Jamie Williamson of Bracknell CID.

The Cat's Whiskers



Amiga artist, Andrew Powell has produced a Furry Female Calendar!

One of the weirder New Year gifts you could buy friends or family (preferably those with a cat fetish) is the 1997 Furry Female Calendar. Hand drawn by Andrew Powell, and published with the help of an Amiga 4000/40 the calendar features 12 fabulous feline friends.

The first 30 copies will be signed by Andrew Powell. If you're interested send a cheque for $20 (US) or $25 (Canadian) to Andrew Powell, 5983 Swayze Dr., Niagra Falls, ON, L2J 3K1, Canada

news

By Tina Hackett

iMS unveil online movie store

Internet Music Shop are to include 23,000 VHS video titles in their previously CD only catalogue. Using the same proven search engine already used to hunt CD titles, iMS will enable customers to find even obscure titles. With 23,000 titles, iMS inform us that even '4 Wheel Drive Trail Riding' is available if that's your cup of tea...

The iMS website is at www.musicshop.co.uk

Click Boom Contact

Anyone wishing to contact the makers of Capital Punishment should note that they have a new telephone number. You should phone PXL on Canada +1 416 868 6388.

Staff Troubles At VIScorp

Rumours are rife that Carl Sassenrath, a key member of the VIScorp staff, has quit his job with the company. Following a posting on an Amiga Newsgroup, a letter allegedly by Sassenrath claims that VIScorp kept him in the dark, were 110 days behind in paying him and that he'd never seen "such an idiotic, screwed-up, incompetent company".

His name is no longer visible on VIScorp's Web site and the letter states that he was "vowing not to be a part of this lunacy".

Jason Compton, Communications Manager for VIScorp, told us,
"Yes, Carl has publicly broken with the company. VIScorp has no official response to his charges or claims. We believe it is more productive to conduct business than become involved in flame wars."

New Omni.Net Web solution

OmniNet, a new product from ZyXEL, was unveiled on October 22. The new product boasts extensive telecommunication facilities at a competitive price. A 460.8Kbps DTE serial port, Stac compression and V.42bis data compression over ISDN enable the OmniNet to download large multi media files easily and means minimum delays while web browsing.

The OmniNet also features two serial analogue ports that allow two ports to be used simultaneously so that you can talk on the phone while faxing, or E-mail while browsing on the Internet. OmniNet is compatible with all operating environments.

ZyXEL aim to retail the OmniNet at about $299, For further details contact ZyXELs web site at http://www.zyxel.com/

Technocom to introduce US Robotics x2

Technocom are following Netcom's lead in introducing the US Robotics x2 modem technology. The x2 modem offers a data transfer rate of 56Kbps, nearly twice as fast as most current models.

The 56Kbps technology should greatly improve data transmission for Technocoms customers. According to Nigel Ramsey, technical director at Technocom Internet, the x2 will, 'almost halve time spent downloading information from the Internet.'

To contact Technocom Internet, phone: 01753 714200

Pro-GRAB™... Freezes Frames and Much More!

The Cool way to Grab Images on your Amiga

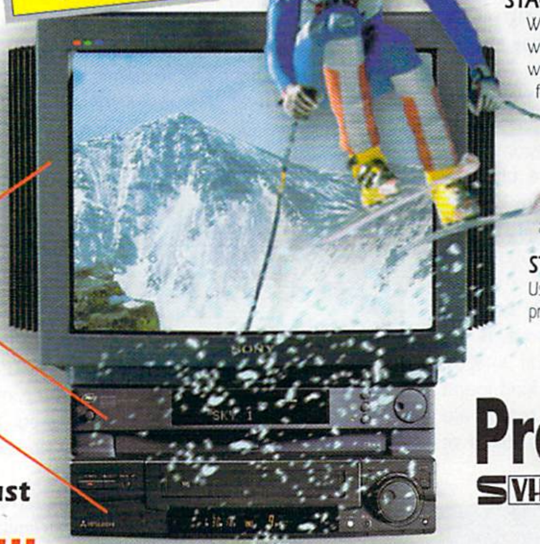
The revolutionary S-VHS ProGrab™ 24RT Plus with Teletext is not only the best way to get crisp colour video images into your Amiga, from either live broadcasts or taped recordings, it also costs less than any of its rivals. This real time PAL/SECAM/NTSC* 24-Bit colour frame grabber/digitiser has slashed the price of image grabbing on the Amiga and, at the same time, has received rave reviews for its ease of use and excellent quality results. ProGrab™ has earned honours from just about every Amiga magazine and Video magazines too!

And... with ProGrab™ you needn't be an expert in Amiga Video Technology, a simple 3 stage operation ensures the right results - Real Time, after time.

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Compatible with both VHS and S-VHS!



Grab images with your camcorder including S-VHS...

or, Take a signal from a TV with SCART output...

or, Use the signal from your satellite receiver...

or, Grab TV or video pictures from your VCR's video output including S-VHS.

STAGE 1...
Select any video source with S-VHS or composite output. This could be your camcorder, TV with SCART output, satellite receiver, domestic VCR/player or standard TV signal passing through your VCR/player... the choice is yours.

STAGE 2...
With ProGrab's software, select an image you wish to capture using the on screen preview window and Grab (because the hardware grabs frames in real time, there's no need for a freeze frame facility on the source device!). Once grabbed, simply download and view the full image on your Amiga screen. ProGrab also includes a Teletext viewing and capturing facility from TV or satellite sources.

STAGE 3...
Use the 'grabbed' image with your favourite word processor, DTP or graphics package.

ProGrab **really does** make it that simple!

Pro-GRAB™ SVHS 24RT Plus

WHAT THE MAGAZINES SAY...

Camcorder User commented... "If you're looking for a high resolution 24 bit digitiser then, at this price, ProGrab 24RT represents great value for money." — camcorder USER

ProGrab™ - Voted as **The Best Video Hardware** product for the Amiga. This is especially pleasing because the award comes from the Amiga Shopper magazine's readers... Our **Satisfied** Customers!

ProGrab™ - Amiga Shopper **95% STAR Buy** and remarks like... "Sharp, crisp and faithful to the original colours, we were mightily impressed" and... "Highly Recommended. Whether you are a Videographer or a Graphic Artist, look to the ProGrab 24RT Plus. It's a winner" — Star Buy

ProGrab™ - Amiga Format **93% Gold Rating** and comments like... "ProGrab 24RT Plus is quite simply the digitiser to get", "Incredible value for money - no other digitiser offers so much for so little". When reviewing Vidi Amiga 24RT PRO, Amiga Format said "Save yourself £100 and buy the much superior Pro Grab"

CU Amiga said ProGrab™ is... *"Just the job for beginners and semi professionals on a tight budget" and "very hard to beat. For the money, nothing can touch it"* — CU AMIGA MAGAZINE

ProTel™ Terrestrial/Satellite Teletext Decoder

NEW...

Stand alone unit for grabbing Teletext info (works independently of ProGrab™ and has a much faster download rate). Once the information has been downloaded, ProTel™ allows you to view pages instantly - no more waiting whilst your TV finds the correct page! Files can be exported as ASCII Text for use in a WP, or saved as IFF Graphics for use in your DTP presentations. You don't need a Teletext TV/Video for ProTel™ - the signal can be received through a standard VCR! **£44.95**

ProGrab is just £129.95...

ProGrab 24RT Plus

- Supports all recent Amigas and is also fully AGA Chipset compatible. You can render images in any Workbench screen mode resolution including HAM8 mode (Amiga RAM permitting).
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- Software has built in mono and colour animation facilities. Number of frames dependant upon Amiga's RAM.
- Release 2.6.x software now includes...
  - ADDITIONAL TELETEXT FACILITIES - With either Terrestrial or Satellite TV signals.
  - LARGER PREVIEW WINDOW - Double Resolution and 4 times area of previous ProGrab software.
  - INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT - Now compatible with composite PAL, SECAM and NTSC Straight from the box!

ProGrab is supplied with just about everything you'll need ✣...

- ProGrab™ 24RT Plus Digitiser
- Latest ProGrab Version 2.6.x Software
- Mains Power Supply Unit
- Parallel Port Connecting Cable
- User Manual
- Input sockets for Composite and SVHS.

✣ A video source cable will be required to match your own equipment - Ask for details.

***** *Standard ProGrab hardware is PAL/SECAM/NTSC compatible. Interlace mode options are available with PAL and SECAM only. ProGrab™ supports any Amiga with Kickstart 2.04 or later and a minimum of 1.5Mb free RAM.*

PCMCIA INTERFACE for A1200 and A600

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ProGrab's optional PCMCIA Interface includes the latest version software and extends performance for serious/professional users - offering the following benefits...

- Faster Downloading Times (up to FIVE times quicker)
- Improved animation speeds of up to 11fps (mono) and 3.5fps (colour)
- Saving of animations direct to your Amiga's hard drive
- Freeing of your Amiga Parallel Port for use by a printer or other parallel peripheral
- Sound sampling and animation capabilities (separate sound sampler reqd, see below)

STEREO SOUND SAMPLERS

NEW... Sound Samplers

Two high quality 8-Bit sound samplers, specifically designed for use with our ProGrab 24RT™ digitisers, are now available (PCMCIA Interface required). The HiFi version features the same 30MHz A/D convertor used in the ProGrab™, meaning the maximum frequency is only limited by the Amiga's hardware. It also has a higher bandwidth (40Hz to 20KHz) than the standard version.

Standard Stereo Sampler **£19.95**
Hi-Fi Stereo Sampler **£24.95**

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USA news

by Katherine Nelson

AWeb II upgrade

AmiTrix Development, distributors of the AWeb-II web browser, has announced a new version. Upgrades to version 2.1 are free to registered users of version 2.0. Full versions will be available to new users of the product by November 15.

The new version will support both HTML2.0 and 3.2 (including the support of tables), as well as feature separate control of background and other image downloading, client-side maps, a disk cache which is fully user-configurable, additional mime types, available grayscale palette and more. Plug-ins have been improved as well, such as FTP and MailTo. FTP may be used with FTPMount or AmiFTP.

Prices are listed as $45US or $60CDN, with $5 additional for shipping and handling if ordering direct from AmiTrix.

Star Turn

Syzygy Research & Technology Ltd., makers of The Digital Universe, has added two new features to its Web site. The first is a guest book, which they ask people to sign while browsing their site. Comments may also be sent to Syzygy in this manner.

The second new item is a WebBoard, which allows visitors to post messages in public and have public discussions with other users about one or more of many topics. Digital Universe owners are encouraged to use the WebBoard to communicate with others who share interests in astronomy.

A further feature of the Web site, not quite as new as those listed above, is the searchable index of astronomical images. This is the largest resource of its kind found on the Internet. Over 17,000 images are available. This part of the site is found at http://www.syz.com/images/.



Syzygy Research & Technology Ltd. has made some additions to its Web site at http://www.syz.com/

On Trial

AmigaZone is offering free to the public, two-week trial accounts. These accounts are limited to 2 hours a day for the 14 available days and those using these accounts will not be eligible for the weekly contests on Sunday nights. Paying users do not have these limitations.

To receive one of these free accounts, write to harv@amigazone.com. In the letter, ask for the free account and state your real name, as well as any preferred handle or nickname. Login information will be sent via e-mail.

Showtime

The Gateway Computer Show Amiga97 will be taking place on 15 and 16 March 1997 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. This is the third Gateway Computer Show and will feature, among others, companies such as SoftLogik, Intangible Assets Manufacturing, and QuikPak. User groups from other areas are expected to attend as well.

Admission is $10US per day or if purchased in advance, $15US for both days. A buffet dinner is available to a limited number of guests for $30US per person. Reservations in advance are required for this event. A special rate is available at the Harley Hotel. Call 314-291-6800 to make reservations and mention the Gateway Computer Show to receive the show rate. Airfare discounts on TWA flights are also available through Best Way Travel, at 314-291-0110.

Sale of Products

Intangible Assets Manufacturing has announced a new sale available through the end of 1996. Some of the products featured include the Dave Haynie video "The Deathbed Vigil", Disksalv4, the book "Connect Your Amiga!", MRBackup 2.5 and Megaball4. IAM accepts orders paid through cheques in US dollars, as well as Mastercard and VISA.

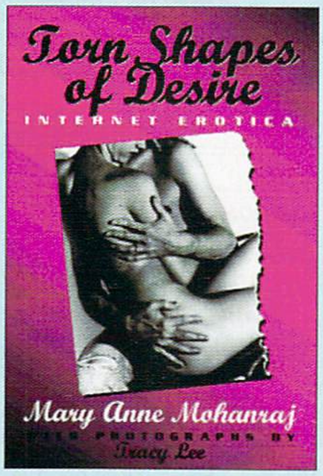
IAM has also written an open letter to the Amiga community concerning advertising problems with the North American Amiga publication Amazing Computing.

The company states it has had a full-page advertisement in Amazing Computing for the past six months without incident. However, when the ad IAM usually runs was updated to include their its non-Amiga book "Torn Shapes of Desire: Internet Erotica", by Mary Anne Mohanraj, Amazing Computing refused to accept the advertisement.

IAM has stated they will not advertise in Amazing Computing unless all their products may be featured. It has asked the people of the Amiga community to renew Amazing Computing subscriptions and to subscribe if not already, but if they share the view that this type of advertising should not be censored, to point it out on subscription cards and through letters.

IAM also asked that information about their sales and products be passed by word of mouth as well as through its Web site, due to the fact they have lost a venue for advertising.

More information is available on the IAM Web site. Amazing Computing has made no public response to this letter.



Torn Shapes of Desire is the source of dispute between IAM and Amazing Computing.

Contact Point

AmiTrix Development
5312 - 47 Street
Beaumont, Alberta T4X 1H9
Canada
Phone/Fax: 403-929-8459
Email: sales@amitrix.com
support@amitrix.com
WWW: http://www.networx.com/amitrix/index.html

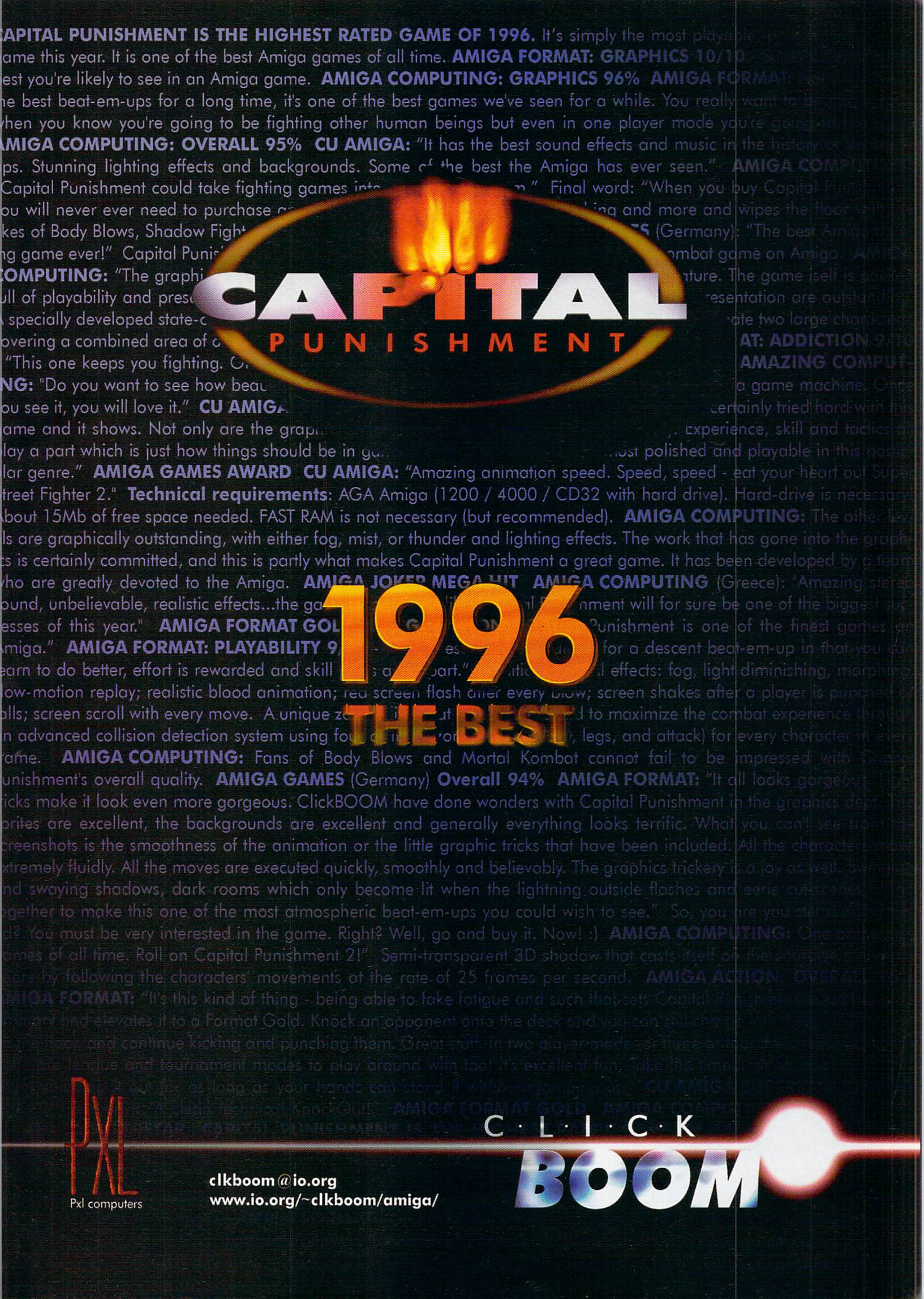
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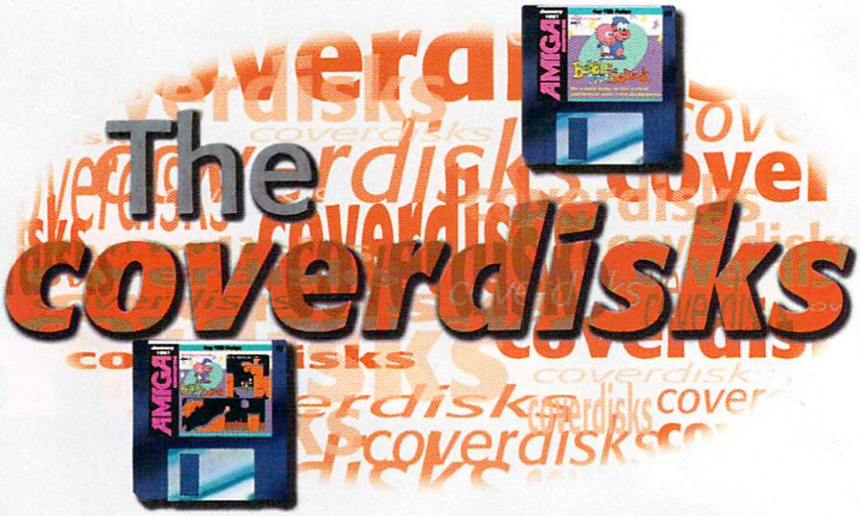
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APITAL PUNISHMENT IS THE HIGHEST RATED GAME OF 1996. It's simply the most
ame this year. It is one of the best Amiga games of all time. AMIGA FORMAT: GRAPHICS 10/10
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e best beat-em-ups for a long time, it's one of the best games we've seen for a while. You really
hen you know you're going to be fighting other human beings but even in one player mode you're
AMIGA COMPUTING: OVERALL 95% CU AMIGA: "It has the best sound effects and music in the history
ps. Stunning lighting effects and backgrounds. Some of the best the Amiga has ever seen." AMIGA COMPU
Capital Punishment could take fighting games into ... Final word: "When you buy Capital
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OMPUTING: "The graphi... ture. The game itself is
ll of playability and pres... esentation are outstand
specially developed state-c... ate two large chara
overing a combined area of ... AT: ADDICTION 9/10
"This one keeps you fighting. ... AMAZING COMPUT-
NG: "Do you want to see how beau... a game machine.
ou see it, you will love it." CU AMIGA ... certainly tried hard with this
ame and it shows. Not only are the graph... experience, skill and tactics
lay a part which is just how things should be in ga... most polished and playable in this
lar genre." AMIGA GAMES AWARD CU AMIGA: "Amazing animation speed. Speed, speed - eat your heart out Super
treet Fighter 2." Technical requirements: AGA Amiga (1200 / 4000 / CD32 with hard drive). Hard-drive is necessary
bout 15Mb of free space needed. FAST RAM is not necessary (but recommended). AMIGA COMPUTING: The other lev
ls are graphically outstanding, with either fog, mist, or thunder and lighting effects. The work that has gone into the graph
s is certainly committed, and this is partly what makes Capital Punishment a great game. It has been developed by a team
ho are greatly devoted to the Amiga. AMIGA JOKER MEGA HIT AMIGA COMPUTING (Greece): "Amazing stere
ound, unbelievable, realistic effects...the ga... nment will for sure be one of the bigges
esses of this year." AMIGA FORMAT GOL... Punishment is one of the finest games
miga." AMIGA FORMAT: PLAYABILITY 9... for a descent beat-em-up in that you
arn to do better, effort is rewarded and skill ... part." ... effects: fog, light diminishing, morph
ow-motion replay; realistic blood animation; red screen flash after every blow; screen shakes after a player is punched
lls; screen scroll with every move. A unique ... to maximize the combat experience
n advanced collision detection system using ... legs, and attack) for every character in every
ame. AMIGA COMPUTING: Fans of Body Blows and Mortal Kombat cannot fail to be impressed with
unishment's overall quality. AMIGA GAMES (Germany) Overall 94% AMIGA FORMAT: "It all looks gorgeous
icks make it look even more gorgeous. ClickBOOM have done wonders with Capital Punishment in the graphics dep
prites are excellent, the backgrounds are excellent and generally everything looks terrific. What you can't see from
creenshots is the smoothness of the animation or the little graphic tricks that have been included. All the characters
xtremely fluidly. All the moves are executed quickly, smoothly and believably. The graphics trickery is a joy as well.
nd swaying shadows, dark rooms which only become lit when the lightning outside flashes and eerie cutscenes
gether to make this one of the most atmospheric beat-em-ups you could wish to see." So, you are you
d? You must be very interested in the game. Right? Well, go and buy it. Now! :) AMIGA COMPUTING:
ames of all time. Roll on Capital Punishment 2!" Semi-transparent 3D shadow that casts itself
by following the characters' movements at the rate of 25 frames per second. AMIGA ACTION:
IGA FORMAT: "It's this kind of thing - being able to fake fatigue and such that sets Capital
and elevates it to a Format Gold. Knock an opponent onto the deck and you can still
and continue kicking and punching them. Great stuff, in two player mode or three
league and tournament modes to play around with too! It's excellent fun.
CAPITAL
PUNISHMENT
1996
THE BEST
PXL
Pxl computers
clkboom@io.org
www.io.org/~clkboom/amiga/
C·L·I·C·K
BOOM



The coverdisks

Only one offering this month – but boy it's a cracker! – and it's the ***exclusive*** full game too

Extracting Cover Disk Files

Before putting the cover disks anywhere near your computer, write protect them by moving the black tab in the top corner of the disk, so you can see through the hole. Doing this makes sure you cannot damage your disks in any way. There is also no reason why the cover disks need to be written to, so even if the computer asks you to write enable the disks, don't do it.

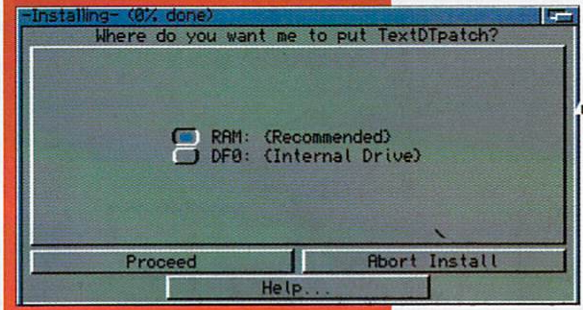
To extract any single archive, simply double click its icon, and follow the on screen instructions. If you want to extract the program to Ram, select the NOVICE level on the welcome screen, and press proceed once on the current screen, and then again on the next. The program can then be found in your Ram disk. Normally most programs need further installing, so read the documents on how to do this.

Hard Drive Users

Hard drive users do not have to boot with the first disk, but you must make sure you have the Amiga's *Installer* program in your C drawer. To make sure your hard drive has the correct files in place double click on the SetupHD icon. This will check if you have the Installer program and if not will copy it across. Do not worry as it will not write over any existing files.

All you hard drive owners will find MultiExtract very useful. It is a separate method of extracting the cover disk files. It allows you to extract a number of files in one go, to your hard disk or Ram.

When you run MultiExtract, you will be presented with a number of check boxes, each representing one of the programs on that cover disk. Just de-select all the programs you do not want extracting, and then press proceed. All the selected programs can now miraculously be found in the selected destination.



This is MultiExtract for all you sensible people with hard drives

Drive Problems

Audiogenic have told us certain disk drives have problems with Bubble and Squeak's copy protection. If you find the game asking you to insert disk 3 you should try running your machine holding down the left mouse button when you run the game. This will flash the screen green to show it is trying the other version.



Bubble and Squeak

Author: Audiogenic



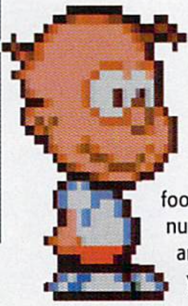
If your planet had just been taken over by an evil band of villains controlled by a vial tyrant called Kat of Nine Tails the last person you are going to send in to give them a good kickin' is a Charley Brown look-a-like. But hey if your planet is called Grool go figure.

Your name is Bubble, and even though looking like a small baby might hinder picking up the nice ladies, you haven't got time to think about that sort of thing.

You have to guide you and your best, if slightly stupid mate, Squeak through 30 tough levels to help rid the planet Grool of this nasty Kat of Nine Tales fella.

This isn't going to be a walk in the park, ooh no it certainly is not, as you have got to contend with snakes, red things that spit at you, baseball packing penguins and flying pink elephants with a nasty catarrh complaint.

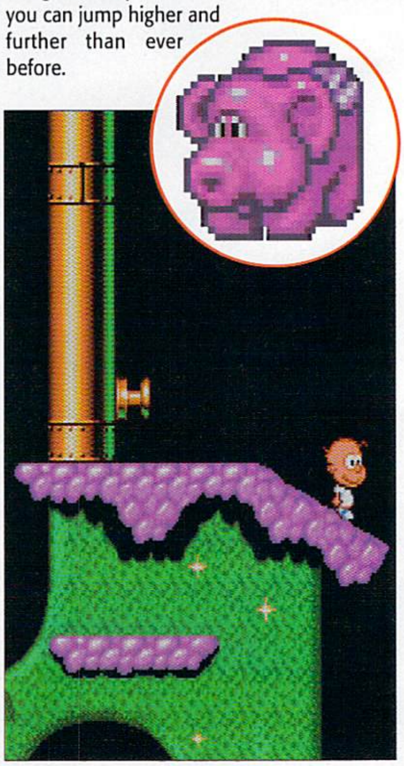
On top of that your big buddy Squeak must have been on the old tranquillisers as he cannot do anything without having to follow you around. So not only do you have to negotiate all the nasties, you have to lead Squeak around all the platforms and lifts. There are even curved platform sections that you can kick Squeak around – not that he seems to mind, those tranquillisers can be pretty strong you know.



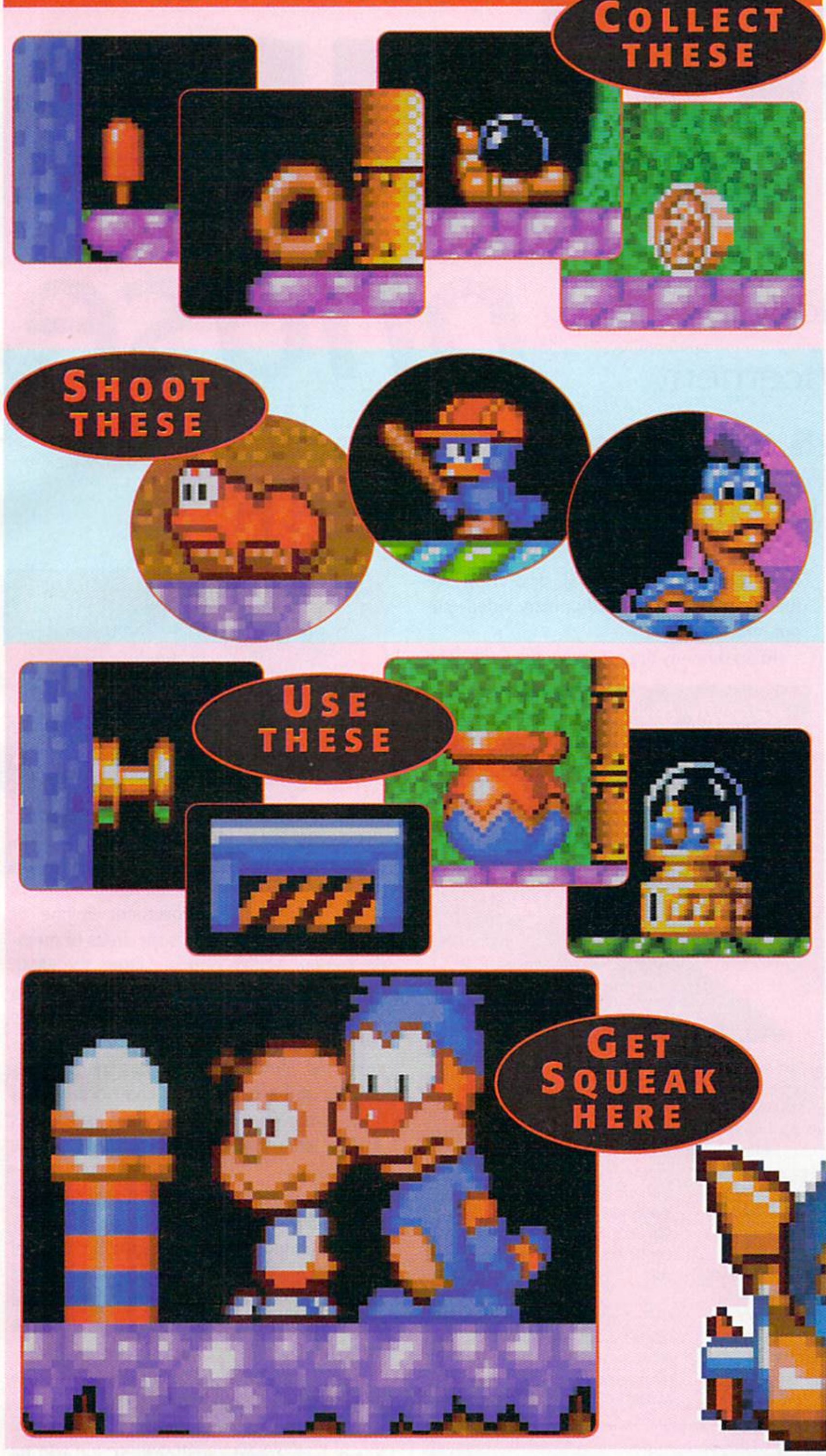
Along the way are many things to pick up – gems boost your score, any food you find increase the number of hits you can take and if you find a little craft you get to go on one of the bonus shoot-em-up rounds. The odd puzzle is thrown in forcing you to use that grey mush between your ears now and again and to add a little theatrical drama slowly raising waters don't let you dawdle either.

Squeak is not entirely a fifth wheel - he does actually have a couple of helpful talents. If you get him to stand still you can jump on his head and give yourself a little extra height when you need to make those extra long jumps.

You can also bribe him into giving you a piggy back by putting three credits into a gum machine and then kicking it to give Squeak the gum. Jump onto his back and the two of you can jump higher and further than ever before.



THINGS TO DO

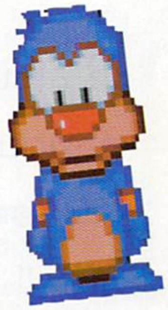


FAULTY DISKS

If you should find your Amiga Computing CoverDisk damaged or faulty, please return it to:

TIB Plc, TIB House, 11 Edward Street, Bradford, W. Yorks BD4 7BH.

Please allow 28 days for delivery



GET A GRIP

If you have never played a platformer before, where have you been for the last 15 years? Haven't you ever heard of Manic Miner. Anyway controlling Bubble is dead simple – run and jump around like you are a mad idiot. Depending on your controller, there are a couple of extra little things you need to know.

One button joystick

Up – Jump
Fire – Fire/Kick Squeak around ramps
Fire + Down – Fetch Squeak/Use gum machine

Two button joystick

Fire 1 – Fire
Fire 2 – Jump
Fire + Down – Fetch Squeak/Use gum machine

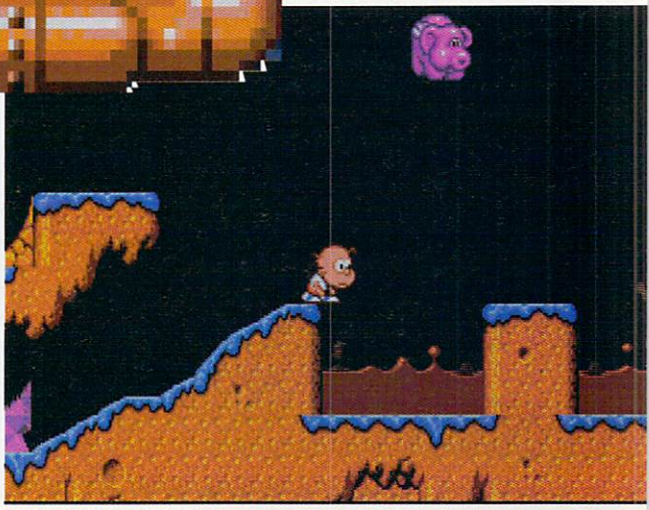
CD32 Joypad

Red – Shoot
Blue – Jump
Green – Fetch Squeak









Future *phase*

In a sudden announcement, **Phase5** tells of its **PowerUp** project and an all-new computer called the **A\BOX**

Completely out of the blue, Phase5 has announced it's plans to release its very own computer sometime in 1997 – probably towards the later half of the year. Dismayed at the failure of Amiga Technologies to develop anything towards a PowerPC based Amiga, it has struck out on its own.

Phase5 wants to develop a powerful workstation based around its very own custom chip. This chip is currently under design by Phase5 engineers and will take care of most of the important functions in the finished A\BOX. It will handle all memory administration, DMA for the video display, audio, blitter and I/O functions. At present Phase5 hopes to have the first working silicon versions of the chip by mid 97.

Titled Caipirinha, the custom chip is a VLSI chip and will be fabricated as a 0.35m CMOS chip. With a 128 bit memory bus and addition dual port buffers on the data lines, the chip will initially run at 100MHz externally and 200MHz internally. Caipirinha will provide the data through-put for functions not dependant on the processor such as 3-D and multimedia applications.

Dual role

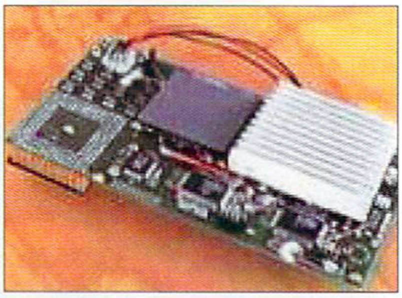
Caipirinha is a complex controller that manages both the system and memory. The A\BOX memory is entirely managed by the Caipirinha chip in a Unified Memory Architecture or UMA. You should be aware the Amiga has two types of memory – chip and fast memory. Chip memory can be accessed by all the Amiga's custom chips and the processor, while fast memory can only be accessed by the processor. Caipirinha's memory space is like the normal Amiga chip memory in that any of it can be used to store any type of data – be it display data or program code.

Unlike the Amiga's chip memory however, it will not be crippled by slow access speed. By using a 128 bit data bus and high speed SDRAM clocked at 100MHz, the A\BOX's memory bus has a peak bandwidth of 1.6Gb/s. which Phase5 says is enough to both feed the display, processor and other parts of the A\BOX.

On the display front, Caipirinha has two video DMA engines. One runs at 220Mhz and is the primary display, capable of screen resolutions up to 1600x1280 in 24 bit and with a refresh of 75Hz. A secondary genlock capable output runs at 135Mhz and can be used for a second monitor in PAL/NTSC or S-VHS resolutions or piped onto the primary video output into a window.

To accompany the processor the Caipirinha has a Flexible Area Movement Engine or FAME used to move and copy areas of memory around. Unlike normal blitters the FAME can handle none rectangular outlines. Also integrated in the FAME unit is a DSP. With it's own command set the DSP can be fully programmed allowing it to support specific multimedia and 3-D functions and because it is fully programmable, as new standards appear, software can be updated to take advantage.

Initially the A\BOX has been designed with PowerPC 603e and 604e processors in mind and theoretically these can be run up to 500MHz



One of the rare Alpha stage PowerUp boards

Audio output is stereo CD quality, internally the number of possible tracks is only limited by memory thanks to the use of virtual tracks. The FAME engine again plays a part allowing real-time effects to be applied, and FM-synthesised sounds are also possible using the DSP.

A PCI bus will be integrated into the Caipirinha and a local 16 bit DMA bus is provided along with a standardise firewall bus – a very high speed serial port. SCSI-II will be standard with an external port and an integrated ISDN connection. Both video and sound input is possible and will allow real-time processing.

Initially the A\BOX has been designed with PowerPC 603e and 604e processors in mind and theoretically these can be run up to 500MHz. The first A\BOX design allows for two processors on the processor bus, with a second being added through an expansion option. Memory expansion will be via 64 bit SDRAM modules and with eight slots will have a total possible expanded memory space of1Gb.

Jargon box

Firewall - A standard high-speed serial bus invented by Apple. Current implementations allow up to 200Mbits/s to be transferred, the idea being any thing can be plugged into it, monitors, printers, modems, keyboards. All using the same connector, so you do not even have to think about adding peripherals. Future versions allow up to 1.2Gbits/s

SDRAM - Synchronous Dynamic Random Access Memory, a form of DRAM which adds a separate clock signal to the control signals.
SDRAM chips support burst access modes that clock out a seriesof successive bits

ISDN - Integrated Services Digital Network, a set of communications standards allowing a single wire or optical fibre to carry voice, digital network services and video. ISDN is intended to eventually replace the plain old telephone system, but thanks to BT it is far too expensive. Standard home ISDN gives you two 64Kbit lines to transmit and receive data

DSP - Digital Signal Processor, typically a highly optimised RISC processor used to perform complex mathematical functions or streams of data

The corner-stones of the Caipirinha design:

- 128 bit high performance UMA (Unified Memory Architecture) controller, using fast SDRAMs with a clock frequency of 100 MHz and a maximum band width of up to 1.6 G-bytes/second
- 64 bit processor bus with a maximum clock rate of 100 MHz
- two 24 bit video DMA units with freely addressable access, with integrated 24 bit video DAC's
- four 16 bit audio outputs, 44.1 KHz with any number of virtual tracks, sample output FM and AM synthesis
- video-in ports for two independent video inputs in Y/UV 4:2:2 quality
- audio inputs in 16 bit stereo CD quality
- LCD (TFT) controller according to the VESA standard
- a PCI bus interface for medium-performance I/O applications
- a local 16 bit DMA bus with 66.7 MHz and a maximum band width of 132Mb/second for universal low-cost applications
- an integrated IEEE 1394 firewire controller for digital I/O applications
- a desktop bus interface.

POWERUP YA PURSE

Along with the interesting announcement of its A\BOX, Phase5 has also given updated details of its ongoing PowerUp project which has now materialised in the form of the developer alpha boards. This allows all the developers who signed up with Phase5 to proceeded with developing PowerPC products to run on Phase5's PowerUp boards.

Full commercially available versions of the cards will be released mid 97. The boards will feature a dual-processor system, based around either the 68060 or 68040 and a PowerPC processor – both share the memory and system bus as required. Both processors work in parallel and can run task simultaneously and can access the entire address range with the PowerPC having direct access to chip memory or a fitted graphics card.

As standard the PowerUp boards will come with CyberGraphX v3 native which was specifically written to take advantage of the PowerUp board and features Mpeg video support and 3-D support in the form of CyberGL.

Currently Phase5 has almost 500 registered developers some of which hope to demonstrate early versions of their PowerPC software at the Computer 96 show.

Among some of the more well known developers are Cloanto, who promise a PowerPC version of their up and coming Personal Paint 7 as well as possible versions of other programs in the Personal software range. Digita are also going to be looking into porting Wordworth 6 after its release. GP Software is planning to do PowerUp versions of DOpus and GPFax. Holger Kruse will be supporting PowerUp with a new version of Miami.

Raytracers will be well catered for with planned versions of Cinema4D from Maxon. Alladin 4D and ImageFX from Nova Design are expected to see PowerPC version early in 94 and work has already commenced on a PowerUp version of the famous German package Reflections – Oberland Computer hope to demo a version at the Computer 96 show.

ProDAD is just one German company strongly backing Phase5. Its first product being CockTel a dubiously named picture phone system that can take direct advantage of the PowerPC with its complex compression and decompression routines to increase transmission quality. Monument Professional and Adorage will both be updated for the new systems.

Possibly more importantly, ProDAD has, for the last couple of years, been working on its very own Amiga-like PowerPC operating system called p-OS.

PowerUp board's pricing

PPC 604e-150 Mhz	68060-50Mhz	DM 1.830/US$1,200/£760
PPC 604e-150 Mhz	68040-25Mhz	DM 1,275/US$835/£530
PPC 604e-160 Mhz	68040-40Mhz	DM 1.350/US$880/£560
PPC 604e-180 Mhz	68060-45Mhz	DM 2.100/US$1,375/£875
PPC 604e-200 Mhz	68060-50Mhz	DM2.500/US$1,600/£1,040
PPC 604e-200 Mhz	680060-50Mhz	DM 2.000/US$1,300/£830

For existing Blizzard owners

PPC 604e-150/160 Mhz	68060-50Mhz or 68040-40Mhz	DM 1.000/US$650/£420
PPC 604e-180 Mhz	68060-50Mhz	DM 1.250/US$820/£420
PPC 604e-200 Mhz	68060-50Mhz or 68040-40Mhz	DM 1.550/US$999/£645

Obviously this is only to give you an idea of what the final release prices will be and does not include the even lower priced 603e boards, which will be mainly aimed at A1200 owners. A possible problem is that the A1200 PowerUp boards may only be available for A1200 tower systems, such as the ones produced by Eagle and MicroVitech, either for room or power reasons.

Phase5 is not going to make the mistake of not having world-wide distribution. It aims to set up an active international distribution system during 1997, along with all the technical and sales support that such a product demands and needs. This includes hiring sales representative for the A\BOX and training them correctly so they can actually use it, something the old Commodore did not do when the A1000 was first released.

Currently Phase5 have a good Internet presence with a well constructed and regularly updated Web site. They expect that it will continue to play an important part in sales, support and marketing on a global scale.

Whenever the A\BOX makes its first publicly available appearance Phase5 are going to make sure it is well equipped and priced. Their basic A\BOX systems will be sold in a price range starting from £1,300 (DM 3,000 US$2,000) and will feature a 150 MHz PowerPC processor, 16 Mb RAM, a minimum hard disk size of 1Gb range and a CD-ROM drive.

If all this still seems too much, Phase5 says a lower specification version of their Caipirinha system could be designed. A 64 bit version would have reduced screen resolution the maximum being 1280x1024 at 24 bit while still retaining all the other functions. Phase5 believe such a system could be delivered for well below the £800 mark and are planning to approach other partners in the future who have the large-scale manufacturing of such a product.

Initial reactions have ranged from entirely hysterical all the way to very sceptical. Personally I feel Phase5 are making the best out of a bad situation, but with questions over the operating system and even as to whether the UMA is a good idea, things are not that clear cut.

P-OS

The most ambiguous part of the A\BOX announcement was with regard to which operating system the will A\BOX run on. Phase5 does say a large number of options will available but doesn't actually name any. It does aim to implement an AmigaDOS compatible operating system, but apparently this, at the moment, just consists of the exec library.

More interestingly p-OS is a new hardware independent operating system developed by ProDAD over the last couple of years and seems to be coming along quiet nicely. ProDAD has already said it will make it available on PowerPC system, including the A\BOX and the makers of StormC are aiming to allow easy cross compilation to both PowerPC and p-OS.

Major current point of p-OS

- Runs parallel to AmigaDOS based on AmigaDOS Exec kernal. Or 100% p-OS, based on faster p-OS kernal.
- Full network support
- Multithreaded applications supported, two people on two systems work on the same application at the same type
- 70% Source-Compatible to AmigaDOS to allow easy porting of Amiga programs
- RTG fully integrated with 24 Bit Support, with Alpha channels, if the hardware supports it.
- Instead of memory protection there is a special debugging version, that has all the protection features for developers. The developer version is slower, but the machine will give you detailed error messages instead of crashes



Looking like a cross between MUI and the Amiga's Workbench, p-OS looks good

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CU Amiga: 91% AUI: 93%

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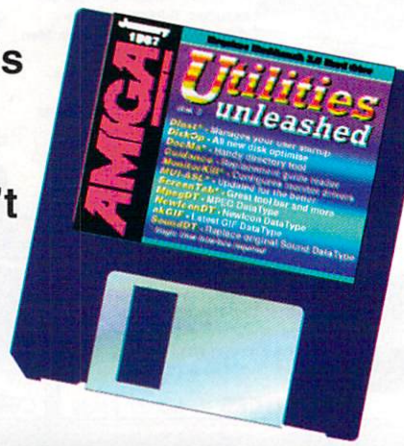
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Heroes & Villains part two

Gareth Lofthouse completes the history of the good and bad guys that made the story of the Amiga

Jonathan Anderson

Who ?
Joint MD of Amiga Technologies UK

Claim to fame
In the Escom days, getting information about AT's plans from Jonathan Anderson was like trying to get blood out of a stone, which didn't exactly endear him to the journalists.

People were mildly impressed with the software bundle he negotiated, even though the price (£399 for an A1200, over £2000 for a A4000) was considered far too high. But apparently he rejected Team 17's Worms and Alien Breed in favour of the decidedly poor Whizz ! Anderson was terminated when AT UK moved to Stanstead.



The Legacy
The very existence of the entire Amiga range...but he hated that name !

Where'd he go ?
Disappeared from the Amiga world without trace

Worship-Loathing Ratio
2:4

John Smith

Who ?
The other John

Claim to fame
The friendly face of Amiga Technologies UK. Smith had to face the daunting task of getting the Amiga back into the shops after an absence of over a year. Perhaps not surprisingly, he was only partially successful; Tandy took a limited amount of A1200s, but otherwise even Escom shops didn't get any supplies until it was too late for Christmas '95. Then he had to deal with complaints that the new A1200s weren't compatible with some Amiga software! When Escom went bust John Smith moved on to Pios.



The Legacy
Sadly Escom's problems crippled Smith's plans for the Amiga before he could see them through

Where'd he go ?
To take charge of Pios's international selling and marketing activities

Worship-Loathing Ratio
3:2

Amiga through the years



Early 1992 The A600 is launched in the UK, still a 68000-based machine but the first Amiga with an IDE controller and a PCMCIA port; but the lack of a numerical keypad proves unpopular. Those who bought the A500 Plus meanwhile find themselves abandoned by Commodore.



Later 1992 Commodore launch the new AGA Amigas. The A4000 comes first - it's good, but expensive with an IDE rather than SCSI interface. The cheaper A1200, on the other hand, is one of Commodore's most successful products, the first widely affordable 32-bit computer.



Christmas 1992 Arguably the beginning of the end for Commodore. Although demand for the A1200 is high, it arrives in the shops at the last minute. Worse, not enough parts had been ordered to build enough to meet demand, but with everyone raving about AGA machines, no one wants to buy the stockpiled A600s.



1993 The CD32, the first 32 bit CD console, was launched. Before long it had captured 38 percent of the CD market, outstripping Sega Mega CD and PC CD-ROM. "Programmers have only scratched the surface of 32-bit CD technology" said David Pleasance. Unfortunately it turned out this was as deep as they wanted to go.

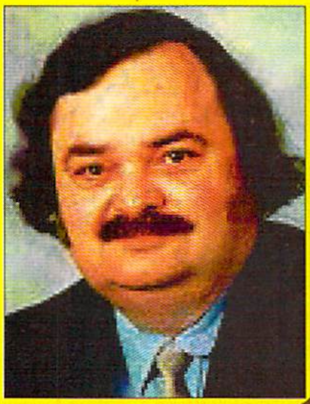
Jabba the Hutt

Who?

No it's not, it's Dr Peter Kittel

Claim to fame

Veteran with 11 years at Commodore behind him plus another year at Amiga Technologies as support manager. Now he has taken charge of documentation and support for Pios, as well as taking responsibility for maintaining the company's Internet communication.



Dr Kittel is also participating in Pios design activities, giving him a central role in the company's attempt to develop a new rival platform to break the Microsoft/Intel monopoly.

The Legacy

Not had much luck recently

Where'd he go

Writing manuals for the Pios gang

Worship-Loathing Ratio

3:2

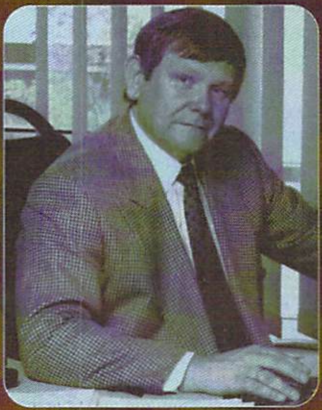
Petro Tyschtschenko

Who ?

He who defies pronunciation

Claim to fame

The President of Amiga Technologies earned considerable respect from his colleagues because of his energy and dedication in working to get the Amiga back into production. His efforts paid off to a certain extent, and AT claim to have sold almost 50,000 A1200s, 4000 A4000Ts and 15,000 monitors.



Sadly his attempts to develop the next generation of Amigas (see The Walker) were thwarted thanks to Escom's growing financial problems. Petro is now working to help tie a deal with Viscorp.

The Legacy

The Amiga put back into production

Where'd he go ?

As the Viscorp buy-out suffers further delay, his position is uncertain

Worship-Loathing Ratio

3:1

Manfred Schmitt

Who ?

CEO of German PC giant, Escom

Claim to fame

When Schmitt and his cronies projects were put on hold. Schmitt left Escom in March 1996; a few months later the German retail giant collapsed.

The Legacy

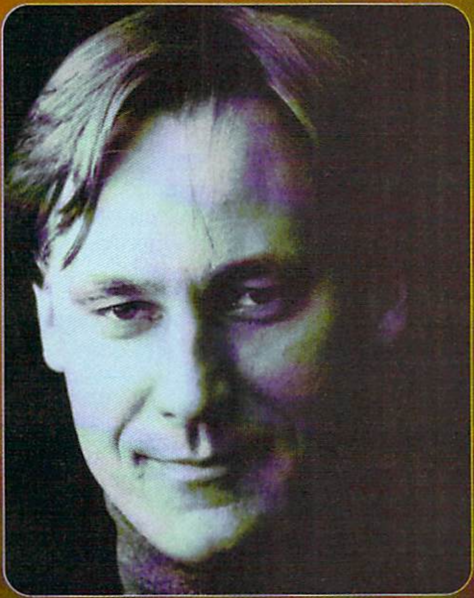
A lot of promises that failed to materialise

Where'd he go ?

Replaced by Helmut Jost, his connection with the Amiga is a thing of the past

Worship-Loathing Ratio

2:4



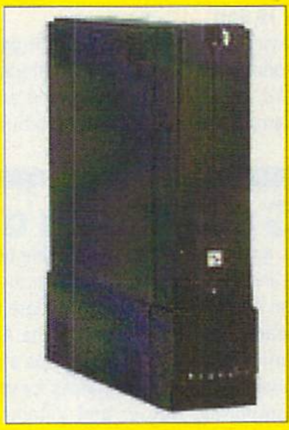
Bill Buck and his friend, ED

Who ?

Saviours of the universe ?

Claim to Famex

Bill Buck is the head honcho at Viscorp, the company currently negotiating a buy-out deal for the Amiga technology. Primarily interested in interactive TV, Mr Buck believes Amiga technology should be at the heart of ED, the set top box.



However, he has also said that the Amiga itself, 'like the phoenix', can rise from the ashes. But the deal remains incomplete at the time of writing and the management's competence has been called into question by Carl Sassentrath following his resignation from Viscorp.

The Legacy

The Amiga at the heart of ED – possibly

Where'd he go ?

Still there working on the deal

Worship-Loathing Ratio

3:3



Early 1994 Commodore engineers are busy working on the AAA chipset, the next step after AGA. These were going to power Amigas with 24-bit graphics and 16 bit CD quality audio. But Commodore debt's were mounting by the day and by mid April, Amiga production is put on hold. The AAA chipset never saw the light of day.



Later 1994 Everyone's worst fears become a reality, as Commodore files for liquidation to protect itself from its creditors. The rumour mill soon kicks off, with whispers circulating that everyone from Samsung to Atari are interested in buying the Amiga. Meanwhile, the liquidation process drags on...and on...



Early 1995 A year after Commodore's demise, Escom beats David Pleasance and Dell to take over the Amiga technology. The German PC-clone maker announces the formation of a new company, Amiga Technologies. But an exciting new logo supposedly imparting a sense of elegance and modernity is all we see that summer.



Later 1995 The Amiga Magic Pack appears and everyone moans it's more expensive than when it vanished...just as the raved-about PlayStation hits the market too. However, AT's commitment to Power PC based Amigas causes cautious excitement among the enthusiasts.

AMIGA ELITE SUPPORT SQUAD

Of course the most important names in the Amiga's history have often had nothing to do with the corporations owning the hardware itself. Indeed, some believe that Commodore's user support was so inadequate it actually forced third party individuals to develop software and products that filled the gaps the Amiga's makers left. Here we honour just a few companies and names that transformed the Amiga into the superb multimedia machine it is today.

1. Digita International
Jeremy Rhyll's company has continued to support the Amiga even through the darkest times during the last two years. Along with rivals Softwood they are responsible for giving Amiga users the wordprocessors, spreadsheets and other applications required by a home computer rather than a games machine. The latest version of their acclaimed Wordworth program continues to develop the Amiga's serious potential.

2. Newtek
The makers of the awesome Lightwave and the Video Toaster. These two industrial power graphical products were so good they won the Amiga its place on the set of top TV programs including Babylon 5 and Seaquest DSV. Though it now produces Lightwave for the PC as well, its commitment to the platform remains strong and Lightwave 5 should be making an appearance on the Amiga by the end of this year.



3. Scala
No-one deserves more credit than Scala for transforming the Amiga into the undisputed (as far as we're concerned, anyway) champion of multimedia machines. The Scandinavian companies ground breaking computer television software has encouraged huge corporations like Ford and Esso to use it for vast and innovative interactive presentations.

4. Team 17
Let's not forget the Amiga's history as an amazing games machine, which is how it all started after all. Team 17 are fondly thought of for games like Alien Breed and more recently, Andy Davidson's top megahit title, Worms. Sadly Team 17 look set to call it a day as far as the Amiga is concerned.

5. Hi Soft
David Links' team has continued to prove there is demand for Amiga products long after a lot of companies gave the machine up as a lost cause. Take, for example, the award winning Squirrel and Surf Squirrel, prime examples of the sort of superb but affordable products Amiga users need.

6. Sensible Software
Perhaps the only other games company that can give Team 17 a run for its money, largely because of the awesome Sensible Soccer. Simplified graphics, rewarding gameplay – these are the ingredients that make Sensible's football games unbeatable even today.

7. Premier Vision
Newtek might have provided the graphical wonders of Lightwave, but it was companies like Premier who had the expertise to show broadcasters how to harness it. Selling high-end but immensely competitive Amiga solutions to the professional, Premier got the Amiga noticed by the likes of the Big Breakfast Show.

8. Softwood
Digita's arch-rivals, and another company that continues to promote the Amiga and develop its capabilities for handling serious application. Final Writer is indispensable to many an Amiga user and Softwood continue to release products that ensure your machine keeps apace with expensive PC products.

9. Macrosystems
The Amiga's role in video production houses wouldn't be so important without the support of this company's innovative products. Take VLAB motion for instance, an affordable peripheral that transformed the Amiga into a professional editing suite, not to mention the amazing Amiga-based Draco.

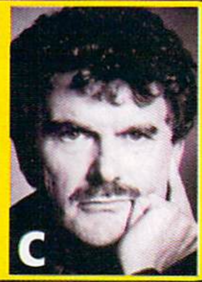
10. Almathera
Even with Commodore out of business, companies like Almathera continue to enhance the Amiga's capabilities. Programmed by Paul Nolan, Photogenics was an image manipulation package that gave Amiga users creative tools normally reserved for Apple Mac users with bottomless pockets for exorbitant software.

GUESS WHO ?

As a tribute to these memorable heroes from the Amiga's past, we've decided to include a small competition in our hall of Amiga fame and infamy. If you can remember who the hell these three guys are and what they did, you have clearly been obsessed with the Amiga's trials and tribulations for too long. Furthermore, if you can send us a postcard telling us who they are, you stand to win five top quality games for your computer. Send your answers to: Amiga Computing, Heroes and Villains Compo, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield. SK10 4NP.


A


B


C

AMIGA THROUGH THE YEARS (CONTINUED)



Christmas1995 AT's success in getting the Amiga back into production is tarnished by the lack of availability. Only Tandy takes a limited number of A1200s, while the Amiga fails to make an appearance in Escom's retail chain in time. Worse, those that by the machine find compatibility problems relating to the floppy drive.



Early 1996 The Amiga Surfer Pack, the eagerly awaited Internet ready hardware/software bundle, is supposedly available. Unfortunately, nobody seems to be able to get their hands on one, either then or now. Behind the scenes, Escom has lost Dm120.



Spring 1996 The development of the first new Amiga machine, known as The Walker, is announced. The prototype is an 030/40Mhz machine including a 4 speed CD Rom drive, powerful expansion slots, simm sockets and a removable dustbag.



Up to date With Escom's financial crisis deepening, Schmitt is replaced by Helmut Jost. In April Viscorp agrees to buy the Amiga technology, but before the deal is finalised Escom go bust. The Amiga's future remains uncertain but not without hope as Bill Buck struggles to complete negotiations with the liquidators.

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Pov-Roy	£25.99
Prima Shareware v1	£9.99
Retro Gold CD	£17.99
Scene Storm	£17.99
Sci-Fi Sensation	£17.99
Sound FX Sensation	£12.99
Sound Library	£17.99
Sounds Terrific v2	£15.99
Source Code	£18.99
Space & Astronomy	£18.99
Speccy 96 Sensations	£17.99
Special FX Vol.1	£17.99
System Booster	£17.99
Utilities 2 (PDSoft)	£17.99
Utilities Experience	£13.99
Weird Sc. AMOS PD	£16.99
Weird Sc. Animations	£16.99
Weird Sc. Clip Art	£8.99
Weird Sc. UPD Gold	£24.99
Workbench Add-Ons	£20.99
World Atlas	£24.99
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FREE!! Prima Shareware CD-ROM worth £10 with every order of CD-ROM software over £30

Clock Cart.

TurboTech Real-Time Clock Cartridge

£14.99

Vista Lite-3

Vista Pro Lite

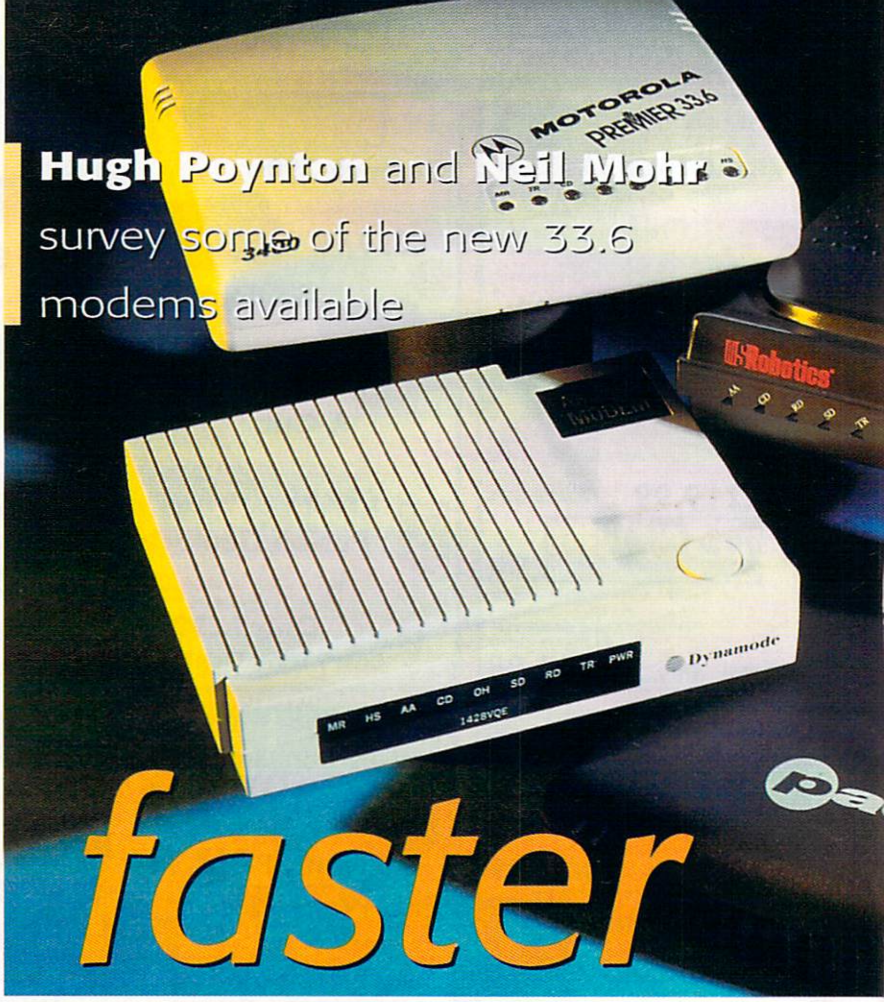
Requires 2Mb of Ram & Hard Disk With Kickstart 2.04 or above.

£9.99

Limited Offer

Go faster

Hugh Poynton and Neil Mohr survey some of the new 33.6 modems available



If our Get Connected feature has inspired you to get on-line, one thing you should have on your shopping list is a good modem. Some of you may be tempted by the lower cost of 14.4 modems, but in the long run, the twice as fast 28.8 and the even faster 33.6 modems will repay this initial extra cost by giving you a lower phone bill.

Modems have come a long way over the last 15 years, starting off at the ridiculously slow 1200 baud rate – modem users were forced to sit in front of their monitors waiting for a page of plain text to load. Modems quickly doubled in speed to 2400 baud, then quadrupled to 9600 and finally reached a speed of 14,400 BPS which made media rich Web browsing a reality.

The last major jump in speed was to the 28,800 modem which translates into around 3.5K of data a second, fast enough to handle all but the largest of Web pages. It does appear however, that modem technology has finally come to its limits, on analogue phones lines at least. The latest bunch of modems to appear only add an extra half K a second increase over older models.

Generally this means if you already own a 28.8 modem, the incentive to upgrade to a new 33.6 is pretty small but 14.4 owners could be tempted by the extra speed. One last thing to consider is, does your ISP use 33.6 modems? Currently Demon does not, but is testing them and I was quiet pleased to see binary downloads jump from 3200 to 3600 bytes a second on its test line, so you can tell the difference. Hopefully all its lines will be kitted out with the new modems soon, non-Demon users will have to check with their individual ISPs.

Dynamode

On-Line PD continues to sell the Dynamode range of modems and has now added a 33.6 to its catalogue. The case and design is identical to the original 14.4 and 28.8 models, which is no bad thing as it is fairly sturdily made.

Everything you want on a modem is there – a 25 pin d-cup serial connector along with both the modem and phone line jacks in the back so you can have both the modem and a phone connected. All the usual status LEDs are down the front and a power switch on top makes it simple to turn it off.

On-Line PD throw in a 25 and 9 pin serial lead along with a double phone adapter so SurfSquirrel users can get going straight away. You also get On-Line PD's Internet pack. While this is not the easiest thing to set up, it does give you versions of the most useful software such as Voyager, Grapevine and MUI 3.6.

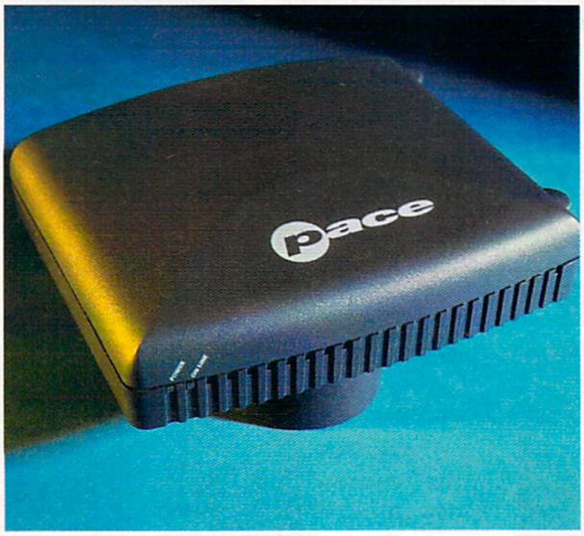
Bottom line

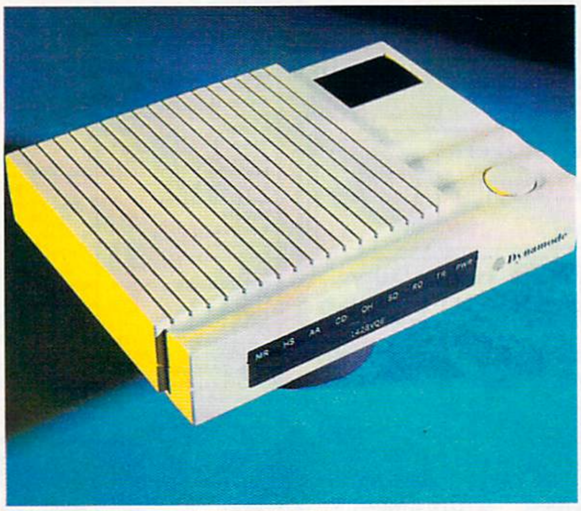
Product details

Product	Dynamode 33.6
Supplier	On-Line PD
Price	£149.99 – £189 with GP Fax
Tel	0990 561001

Scores

Implementation	90%
Value For Money	93%
Overall	92%





Pace Macrolin

The Macrolin Gold Modem is part of Pace's new Macrolin range. The modem itself is tiny, about the size of a Sony Diskman. In appearance the Pace is nondescript, with only two elementary LED status lights. The casing doesn't seem to be particularly rugged, however, at £139 rrp, you wouldn't expect it to be

Jargon Buster

Baud rate - How fast data is transmitted/received by a modem or computer is normally measured in BPS, to make them appear faster than they rally are

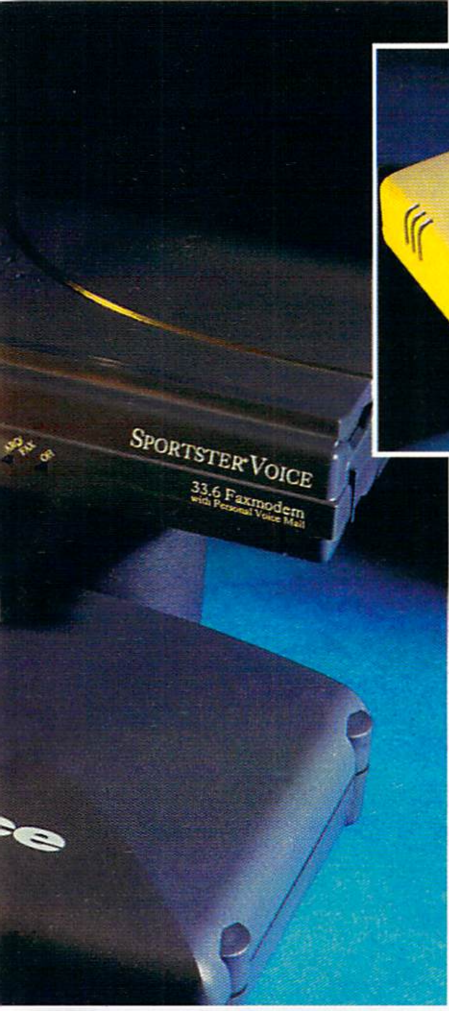
BPS - Bits per second, the number of bits of data transmitted/received a second. Divide the number by eight to find how many bytes a second it can handle and divide again by 1024 to find out how many K it can take

Modem - MOdulator DEModulator, turns a stream of transmitted digital data into a analogue signal and will conversely turn a received analogue signal into a digital stream of data. Modern modems can apply compression, error correction and even handle variable speed transmission and reception

Internet - Something I probably spend far too much time on and if my boss reads this I'm in trouble, ooh dear

BIT - Binary digiT, can be one or zero, a single bit of data

Byte - Eight BITs clumped together





Motorola Premier 33.6

The Motorola Premier 33.6 is another worthy competitor in the modem market. It looks strangely like an albino Pace, although it seems a bit sturdier than the Macrolin Gold. Unlike the Pace though, it has a full LED status display ranged along the front of the modem.

The Motorola delivers the goods specs-wise. Its V34 technology allows it to transmit data at 36.6 kbps and it takes advantage of asynchronous data transmission, allowing it to carry on transmitting and receiving data efficiently even on a very bad line. One particularly useful feature is its FLASH memory which enables you to enhance performance upgrading with the minimum of bother.

The Password Verification feature provides call back security for over 20 users. The modem also has the ability to store up to nine frequently called numbers. The only thing I didn't like about the modem was the fact that the manual was hard to understand and less friendly than the US Robotics manual.

The Motorola Premier is a very impressive machine, scoring 100% for connection reliability and network coverage in CMP Media's on-line Modem consumer test. The Premier seems ideally suited to small business users with its password verification and phone number directory features. In summary, a very competitive and useful modem

Bottom line

Product details

Product	Premier 33.6
Supplier	Motorola
Price	£169
Tel	01462 421440

Scores

Implementation	88%
Value For Money	90%
Overall	85%

OLD

made of titanium.

Despite the unspectacular appearance of the Pace, there are a number of features that make it a pretty good modem. The 33.6 Kbps speed, for instance, sets it apart from many rivals. The Lifetime Warranty is also a bonus and something that not many of the other manufacturers offer.

Pace offers unrivalled free Internet trials with AOL and Compuserve and include a number of complementary disks, but unfortunately all these goodies are pretty useless for Amiga owners. Despite this, it represents brilliant value for money – a top spec. 33.6 kbps modem with a lifetime warranty for £139 is about as good a buy as you're going to get.

Bottom line

Product details

Product	Macrolin Gold
Supplier	Pace
Price	£139
Tel	0990 561001

Scores

Implementation	80%
Value For Money	95%
Overall	89%

US Robotics Sportster

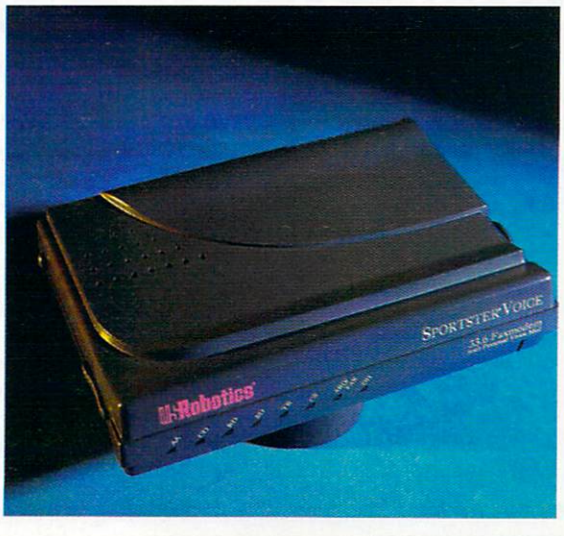
US Robotics has a reputation for producing high quality, no nonsense modems and the Sportster Voice will not endanger this reputation. It feels sturdy and has a peculiar slab sided style to it, which sets it apart from the usual nondescript slightly rounded look of other modems.

The usual US Robotics array of LEDs are ranged along the front of the modem and, for the less technically minded, the function of each status light is explained on the underside of the modem. A helpful vertical stand is built onto the side of the Sportster, should space be a problem.

The technical specifications of the Sportster Voice are impressive; V.42 and V42 bis error correction and data compression, the ability to use Class 1 and Class 2.0 fax software and a data transfer speed of 33.6 kbps. The Sportster also allows the user to record business quality voice-mail using the Personal Voice Mail feature.

The modem can also be used as a speakerphone via the built-in microphones and speakers. However, as you might have guessed, these features can't be taken advantage of by the Amiga user. Similarly, neither can the free SuperVoice 2.2 software and introductory Internet access disks from AOL and Compuserve

One thing I particularly liked about the US Robotics package was the User's Guide that came with the modem. For a non-techie like, me the book was invaluable. The guide explains in clear and concise language the various functions and specifications of the modem. A glossary at the back explained the meaning of such bewildering words and acronyms as ITU-T and YmodemG. Unfortunately the US Robotics Sportster Voice only comes with a five year warranty. Despite this, for the price, it's one of the best BABT approved modems available.



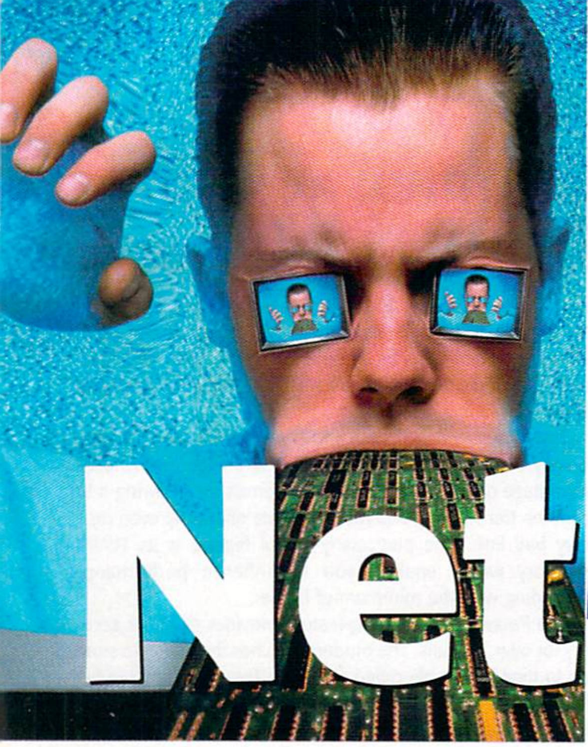
Bottom line

Product details

Product	Sportster Voice
Supplier	US Robotics
Price	£199
Tel	01734 228200

Scores

Implementation	94%
Value For Money	88%
Overall	92%



Tina Hackett and **Gareth Lofthouse** present a no-nonsense, step-by-step guide to getting your Amiga wired for action

Net-heads

The Internet, you're sick of hearing about it. So much so in fact, you've decided that if you can't beat 'em then it's time to join them. But where do you begin? If it wasn't confusing enough with all the terminology: ISPs, FTPs, IRCs, then there's the hardware, software and by the time you've thought about all this, you really are beginning to wonder if it's all worth it. Wouldn't it just be easier to pick up a book or watch TV? If you do though, you could be missing out on something which could eventually match the television in terms of popularity.

Okay, so you've decided to go ahead, where do you go from here? Look no further – our guide takes you through the whole process of getting on-line with your Amiga in easy steps from choosing your modem to making the most out of your time on-line.



Step 1 The night-mare begins

In front you have a daunting knot of wires, a load of peripherals, phone extensions and software. It's a good time to draw up a check-list of what you've got. You'll need: A modem, a serial cable and your basic Internet software (see step six). Obviously, having a phone line you can reach is a must. Finally you should have an Amiga running on a minimum of AmigaDOS 2.04, a hard drive with a minimum of 5Mb free disk space, plus preferably 4Mbs of fast ram to make the Net tolerably speedy. If you're not sure what sort of modem you need, move on to step 2.



Step 2 Choosing a modem

Modems are small peripherals that connect the computer to the Net. You need to be careful to choose one that will suit your needs. Ideally, opt for the fastest modem you can afford - look for 33.6k modems costing around £150. If your Net usage is small and the budget is tight, consider a slower 28.8k or 14.4k modem, but don't expect such blistering on-line performance.

Popular types of modem that work with the Amiga include US Robotics and Supras, but compatibility shouldn't be a problem as long as you buy a reasonably modern make. Most Amiga users can only use *external* modems, however, so don't bother with internal PC modems.

What should I ask my Internet Service Provider?

Check how much you will be paying. Sounds obvious, but some charge an on-line fee, some a monthly fee - check whether this includes VAT.

Some offer special deals such as giving away free Internet space - this means you can create you own Web page and have it on-line for the whole world to view. Okay, so you're only a beginner at the moment but in a few month's time, you may want to start to learn the basics of putting up your own Web page. Demon is one such ISP and offer 5Mb of free space. To give you an idea of what this provides - consider that Amiga Computing's Web site is about 2.2Mb.

Also ask if they have Points of Presence local to you - this avoids long-distance phone calls over the UK when you have to dial your ISP to be connected. Most ISP's have technical advice lines which are used for answering questions from PC owners.

However, it's nice to have specialised Amiga support. Both Demon and Netcom have dedicated Amiga support along with several others. Some have 24 hour support, seven days a week - it's something definitely worth asking.

Bear in mind that if you are using Miami or Termite as your TCP/IP stack, if you want send and receive e-mail, you'll need an ISP that supports POP. Some only support SMTP in which case you should be using AmiTCP to enable you to take advantage of e-mail.



Step 3 Do I need a Surf Squirrel ?

No, all modems can be connected using a serial cable connected to the serial port on the back of the Amiga. This cable should come with your modem; otherwise get a cable with a 25-pin male connector at one end and a 25-pin female connector at the other.

While a Surf Squirrel isn't vital, we'd recommend it for A1200 or A600 owners, as it's a significantly faster means of connecting to the Net - and believe us, you need to speed the Net up as much as possible. If using the Squirrel, however, a standard PC serial cable (25-pin at one end, 9-pin at the other, available from any computer shop) is required instead .



Step 4 Fitting the modem

Don't worry, this bit isn't hard. If using a Surf Squirrel, carefully fit it into the PC slot on the side of your Amiga, then connect the 9-pin end of the serial cable to the Squirrel. The 25-pin end of your cable connects to the back of the modem.

On the back of the modem you should also find two small RJ-11 sockets. The socket called 'Line' should be connected to the telephone socket on the wall. If you wish, you can connect a phone to the other socket, though you can't use this while connected to the Net.

One last thing regarding setting up your modem. When you get to the bit where your Internet software (such as AmiTCP) asks you to set the serial port preferences for the modem, follow these guidelines. If you've got

Which are the best connection packages?

As we've mentioned in the step-by-step guide, you're going to need a package that connects your computer to your Internet Service Provider. Called a TCP/IP stack, there are a few good ones to try out.



TermiteTCP is a good option for 2Mb, A1200 owners

AmiTCP has been the main option for Amiga users with the commercial release, version 4, being the most current. One alternative is Miami, costing £25. This comes with a useful step-by-step program which takes you through linking up to your ISP. It's memory intensive however, and takes up 1Mb rather than the 250k that AmiTCP uses. TermiteTCP (£59.95) is another option and uses less than half a meg – it is however, quite expensive. Both Miami and Termite have the superior PPP dialler, AmiTCP has the SLIP protocol.



What do I need from a browser?

There are a number of browsers available for Amiga owners and the numbers seem to be increasing all the time. IBrowse is one of the new contenders and is already highly regarded. This is from Hisoft and costs around £30.

It works using the MUI system which comes with the commercial package. Features-wise, IBrowse allows you to e-mail someone directly from their Web page if they have displayed an e-mail address. It also supports 'FAB' menus (Fast Action Buttons) which means you can click on an image, for example, and an options menu will be displayed such as saving image to disk. If you get stuck at any point, IBrowse provides a 64 page user-friendly manual to help out.

The only potential problem is that images don't always look as good as they do on another program called Voyager, a freeware browser. For instance, when IBrowse displays 64 colour images they look less impressive. Ibrowse can support 256 colours but on an 020 Amiga things can really slow down.

To run you will need 3Mb of RAM, although 6Mb is recommended as well as a 3.5Mb hard drive and Workbench 3.0. I mentioned Voyager briefly - this has really been superseded now. It does not support animated GIF's which IBrowse can - however, they are working on a commercial release which promises to handle all that IBrowse can plus the controversial Frames.

Depending on personal preference you may prefer another recent hit, AWeb II from Blittersoft (£39.95). This works with both Miami and AmiTCP. Instead of using MUI it has a set of libraries called ClassAct which is included with the program. AWeb II also includes a program called HTML Heaven which helps you easily create your own Web pages. Another difference is that rather than referring to a manual you can go to on-line help which includes information ranging from how to organise your TCP/IP stack to creating a list of your favourite sites.

AWeb II doesn't have the colour dithering problem either. However, IBrowse in terms of looks has the edge with coloured buttons and animated images. So really, it's up to you to decide your priorities here - both browsers are highly recommended.



Okay, I'm on the Internet. Where do I go now?

Well, it depends what your priorities are. If you want to hear the latest Amiga gossip try the Amiga Web Directory. All you need do is type into your browser http://www.cucug.org/amiga.html. Also try the Amiga Home Page (http://www.omnipresence.com/Amiga/). Both have excellent links to Amiga resources - advice, newsgroups, latest rumours and software/hardware links.

For more general sites go to Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com/) - an excellent Web site which not only picks excellent pages out for you but works as a search engine to let you type in a request for sites on a particular topic.

Maybe you want to go on a short break after all your efforts getting connected. The AA (http://www.theaa.co.uk/hotels/) recommends hotels all around the UK, or maybe you want to catch up on all the weekly happenings. The Daily Telegraph have a good on-line newspaper called Electronic Telegraph (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/register.html) which is updated daily. This is just the tip of the iceberg - there are many sites to explore. The best method is either to see for yourself or buy a dedicated listings magazine like IDG's The Web (gratuitous plug-time).

Step 5 - chat with an ISP to get the best deals

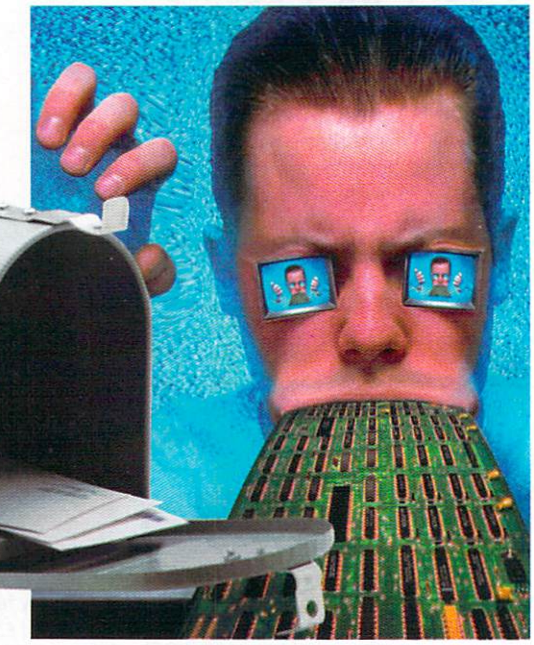
a 14.4k modem, set the speed to 19,200. For a 28.8k modem, on the other hand, set it to 38,400, while if you're using the Surf Squirrel set the prefs to 115,200. These serial port speeds affect the speed at which your Amiga talks to your modem, but if you stick to these rules everything should work fine.

Step 5 Choosing your ISP

Now it's time to arrange an Internet account with an Internet Service Provider. This boils down to phoning an ISP and asking the right questions (see the box on 'What to ask my ISP'). They will be able to talk you through this stage of the process, which is not complex.

Make sure you choose an ISP with good national coverage so you connect for the cost of a local call. Also ensure they can give technical support for the Amiga. Services like Netcom's Amiga Net package are worth considering, as they can provide full software and support packages.





Step 7 - Email makes life easier

Step 6 Starting with the software

The most important software required to connect the Amiga to the Net is a TCP/IP stack, software that includes all the basic Internet utilities like Telnet, FTP and Finger. AmiTCP is the most comprehensive stack program on the Amiga, which exists as a commercial package (with the advantage of full instructions) and as a free demo (available from Blittersoft or off Aminet). Installing AmiTCP isn't too difficult provided you follow the supplied instructions carefully.

AmiTCP needs what is called a dialler. It comes bundled with a dialler called CSLIP, which is adequate for the job, though users may wish to get a superior program called PPP from Aminet. Install the dialler *before* installing AmiTCP, as AmiTCP will ask you to specify which one you're using.

Step 7 Electronic mail and news

Having mastered file transfers using FTP, it's time to try using e-mail and Usenet newsgroups.

To receive e-mail, Amiga users need to install an SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) program. You'll also need to get your hands on specific e-mail handling software, one of the easiest of which is Metatool. This freeware program not only allows Amiga users to send and receive electronic messages, but also handles attachments that can be appended to e-mail.

Newsgroups are forums in which Internet users can post and reply to messages and pictures. There are thousands upon thousands of them, each covering their own topics ranging from Amigas to sport. Several Amiga-compatible applications are available for using newsgroups, such as THOR or freeware like Tin and GRn.

Step 8 Grabbing files from the Net

Now it's time to start accessing some areas of the Net. A vast number of Amiga public domain utilities, games and applications can be downloaded from what's called FTP sites on the Net - which is one serious reason for getting on-line in the first place. FTP (File Transfer Protocol) allows users to access remote computers as if they were using their own hard drives. Remember, Amiga users are very well catered for in this area of the Internet, since Aminet alone represents one of the largest collections of tools, utilities and

What other software do I need?

E-mail software such as Voodoo or AmiPOP or the ones recommended in the step-by-step guide. These let you send and receive messages.

Newsreaders which let you read and post messages to newsgroups

FTP software which allows you to send and receive files, for example, AmiFTP

IRC software such as AmiIRC, will let you talk to other Internet users

programs available !

To find an FTP site in the first place you need to know its address, which you can then use to access the site via FTP software or even a Browser. When you connect to FTP sites they may ask you to login.

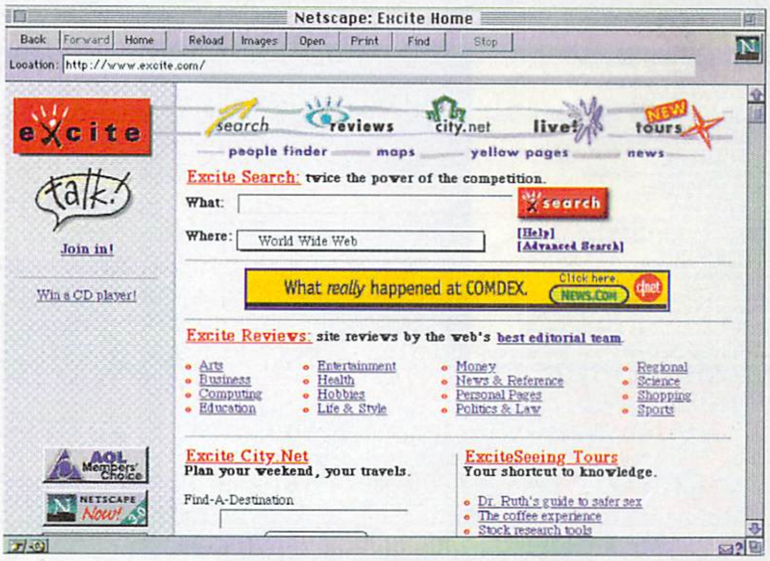
The standard way of getting access to FTP sites is through 'anonymous FTP', which in practice means you should type 'anonymous' at the 'login' prompt. When asked for a password, simply enter your e-mail address which your ISP will have given you.

In terms of the software you'll need to do this, users with AmiTCP should already have *ncftp* which does the job adequately, despite being completely text-based. A better and more user-friendly program called AmFTP is available as shareware.

Having logged onto a FTP site, you will find file organised into directories. Files can be transferred onto your Amiga, though they are often compressed so make sure you have an Lha program capable of de-archiving them.

A Simple Guide to Terminology

FTP - File Transfer Protocol. This is used for transferring files to and from the Internet
Frames - Some Web sites split the design into different sections with the intention of making the site more attractive. However, some say they make getting around more complicated.
PoP - Point of Presence. Service Provides should have Points of Presence all over the UK to save you making long distance calls
POP - Post Office Protocol (not to be confused with PoP - easy hey?)
SMTP - Simple Mail Transfer Protocol
ISP - Internet Service Provider. The people who connect you to the Net.
WWW - World Wide Web
IRC - Internet Relay Chat. People can talk to each other over the Internet in real-time
HTML - HyperText Markup Language. The language used to write a page for the Web.





Step 9 Chatting on-line

Doubtless you've heard of people meeting their dream partner in a chatroom on the Internet. Normally, IRC channels are rather less glamorous, but are nevertheless worth experimenting with because, unlike Newsgroups, IRC has the advantage of letting you enter live discussions.

To use Internet Relay Chat, you need an IRC client like the shareware program Grapevine. Users also need to think up a unique nickname that everyone on chat channels can refer to - the sadder the nickname the better seems to be a good rule of thumb for IRC!

When you've got your IRC client set up, the standard Amiga channel to look for is #Amiga. To join it simply type /join #Amiga and you'll be able to join in the discussion.

Step 10 World wide wonderland !

At last you're ready to enter the promised land of the World Wide Web. In the last two years, the graphically pretty Web is the area of the Net that's been generating all the hype, but it's only in the last year that most Amiga users have been able to use it to the full.

The Web is composed of sites carrying pages of text combined with pictures and sometimes even sounds and downloadable mini-movies. To surf the Web and access these sites you'll need a Browser program, an Amiga equivalent of Netscape. The top choices for Amiga available at the moment are IBrowse, for which you'll also need MUI (Magic User Interface), and the faster and lighter AWeb II. For information on the relative merits of these packages, see our box on browsers.

Most people think Amigas can't handle the more advanced features to be found on the Web. However, Multiview will play most sound files such as WAV - your browser will simply load the soundfile into Multiview to have it played. Better still, if you want to see the film clips on some Web sites, you can now get QuickTime for the Amiga. Both Multiview and QuickTime can be obtained from Aminet.

The biggest problem regarding the Web is finding the information you want - it's just so big and there's no quality control ! This means you need a Search Engine like Excite. To get there type *http://www.excite.com/* in the location gadget on your Browser and press Return. Excite's main page has a button you can click on to bring up instructions on how to search for the information you want.

All in one options

Theoretically, they do all the work for you. On offer for example is HiSoft's Net&Web which includes Ibrowse and AmiTCP, MetaTool e-mail program and DaFTP for file transfer.

Another which is in development, is NetConnect from Active Software. This will contain commercially licensed software such as a new version of the browser Voyager as well as Power Mail and AmiTCP v4.4.

Internet Service Providers, Netcom are pledging support to the Amiga with a specific service and software package called NETCOMplete.

Contacts

HiSoft 01525 718181
Blittersoft 01908 261466
Ryker Registrations (Miami)
1 Shrewsbury St, Oldham, OL4 2RS.
Active Software 01325 352260
Netcom 01344 395500

AC

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You may choose 1 FREE disk If Mouse Mat Not Required

MUSIC

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M002 MICHAEL JACKSON - Song BAD
M003 DO THE BARTMAN
M005 100 C64 TUNES (not A1200)
M006 BAT-DANCE REMIXED
M017 GUNS & ROSES - YOU'RE CRAZY
M018 MONEY FOR NOTHING - DIRE STRAITS HIT SONG
M027 BLUES HOUSE (2 disks)
M029 SAFE SEX DEMO - Very funny
M031 BETTY BOO (2) needs 2 drives (brilliant)
M058 SGT PEPPER (2D)
M072 MADONNA - Hanky Panky Song
M084 C64 GAMES MUSIC
M115 MAHONEY & KAKTUS 2 - 40 tunes compilation
M125 ADAMS FAMILY
M150 TIFFANNY - I Think We're Alone Now
M171 MADONNA - (Like a Virgin)
M173 JANET JACKSON - RHYTHM NATION
M177 PET SHOP BOYS
M184 SAM FOX (Please Me)
M186 MADONNA (Rescue Me)
M188 JOE LE TAXI
M189 MICHAEL JACKSON (Smoot Criminal)
M194 JESUS ON E's (2 disks)
M205 RAVE - More Rave
M262 A TO Z OF C64 GAMES MUSIC (4) Brilliant
M314 DICK TRACY (Madonna) (2)
M335 STAR TREK & STAR TREK NEXT GENERATION (2)

PRINTER MANAGER

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U734 CANON PRINTER STUDIO not A500 (1.3)
U735 PRINTER STAR 24/200 FONT DESIGNER - shareware
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U757 150+ PRINTER DRIVER largest collection

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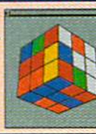
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U046 DARKSTAR no2 (vol 2-5) load of util
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U145 XCOPY PROFFESIONAL very powerful disk copier
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U282 LAND BUILDER create realistic landscape.
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U301 AUTO DISK LOGGER catalogue your disk
U321 GRAPHIC Util 1(3) load of bril graphic util
U324 GRAPHIC util 2(3) even more Graphic tool
U333 SCENERY MAKER more lanscape generator
U334 EMULATOR COLLECTION II (lot of emulator)
U335 FREE COPY back up commercial games
U337 MODEL 3D Brillant 3d object designer
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U510 ULTIMATE BOOT-BLOCK Collection II +more
U512 ZIRCON UTIL-30 MOST USE UTIL 2 brillant
U515 WIT COMPLETE UTIL 20 most use util
U521 SPECTRA PAINT III Very good paint packages
U550 SCENERY CONSTURCTION KIT fractal .recommend
U551 ASSASIN BOOT BLOCK over 50 bootblock protector
U555 CROSSWORD CREATOR (not WB3) crossword maker
U561 PERM CHECK a full POOL PREDICTION program
U568 ICON CONSTURCTION KIT icon making program
U569 ICON ready made (4 disk)
U590 A600 NUMBERIC PAD EMULATOR (A600 only)
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U592 KILL AGA-make older programe run on A1200
U600 C64 EMULATOR II util & document
U601 DISKSALV II + ABACKUP (not wb1.3)
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U620 HOW TO CODE IN C (2disk) + many examples
U622 ACTION REPLAY V1.5(A500/600)-cartridge on disk
U623 ACTION REPLAY V4 (A1200 ONLY) same as above
U645 PC EMULATOR V.2.31(WB3 only) SVGA PC emulator
U650 COPY & CRACK TOOL 2 more powerful copy program
U680 NEW SUPER VIRUS KILLER(not WB3)kill 316+ virus
U689 FORCASTER V2-horse racing predition program
U690 ASSASIN COPIER (lots)include Xcopy3/dcopy ect
U694 SUPER DUPER 3. (NOT WB1.3) Vfast disk copier
U696 AMITOOL PROFFESIONAL disk database tool
U699 MEGACHEAT V3 +(more games cheat even for)
U700 ANIMATION CONSTRUCTION KIT V1.2 + good
U702 V MORPH V2.create smooth morph animation
U703 POOL TOOLS 2(Latest)prediction horse racing.
U705 TRONI-CAD-best create circuit board+examples
U707 GAME TAMER(3&4)-(2)For even more games cheat.
U708 LAST WILL & TESTAMENT-write your will
U710 PERFECT-PAINT 32 Very easy to use paint package
U714 ENGINEER KIT various test kit for Amiga
U718 MAGNUM 1.9 REGARD the best disk magazines creator
U721 FONT FARM V3 + load of font + font viewer
U723 EXOTIC RIPPER rate as the best sound/graphic riper
U724 PARNET SET UP(2) require for the connection
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U729 ASSASIN BOOT UTIL 50 boot block creater util
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U737 ASSASIN CRUNCH & COPY TOOL (WB 1.3 only)
U738 S.KICK PROFESSIONAL v3.2 Various K-start
U739 TURBO IMPLODER V3.1 powerful disk cruncher
U740 CROSS DOS 5.1 plus read/write PC<>AMIGA disk
U741 HD-DISK TOOL BOX +many more Disk util recommend
U742 HOW TO CREATE AUTOBOOT DISK.complete + util
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U744 FRACTAL MANIA+BIOMORPH Brillant collection
U745 AF WORK BENCH (3)(WB 1.3 ONLY) replacement
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U747 ASTROMY V2 predict star planet prediction.
U749 DISK REPAIR 3(floppy & HD)include soft-proctect
U750 MUSIC CATALOGUE.(not A500(1.3) very easy to use
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U760 ICON PLUS (3DISK) Hundreds of stunning ICONS
U761 RELOCKIT 1.4 latest WB1.3 emulator
U762 FAKE FAST MEMORY make more older software run
U777 TELE TEXT RECIEVER project. highly recommend
U781 DOSTRACE V2. display infomation why some programe refuse to run. also moniter Amiga activity. RECOMMEND
U783 POOL WINNER GOLD must for all gamber
U789 HARD-DISK MEMORY V2 use HD as memory (re MMU)
U790 WINDOW BENCH V2 (WB 2/3) 2disk new workbench replacement, include lot of useful utilities
U791 COMPUTER DIAGNOSTIC TEST V9 amiga Fault finding
U800 PRINT A CARD include many ready made
U801 MULTI-PRINT V4 lot of printing util
U805 DISK PRINT print custom disk lables
U807 FONT & PRINT Load of utilities to wiew & print your font collection. RECOMMED
U830 POOL WIZARD -(football) prediction
U832 DIVENDEND WINNER - Prediction rograme for use with LITTLE WOOD, VERMON, ZETTER Ect
U834 FORCASTER 2.02 New Horse prediction Prog
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U850 EAGLE PLAYER (2disk) the best music player.
U851 DELI-TRACKER (2disk) play all music format.
U881 SONIC DRUM KIT V2 Make drum sample
U882 DISK COPY Pack- collection of 10 disk copier
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U887 DISK REPAIR KIT 4-include disk repair, undelete,softproctect, diskmate, sysinfo,ect
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U986 VIRUS-WORKSHOP V5.1-the best Virus killer
U987 GRAPHIC-CONVERTER (2D) Convert picture ect
U988 TURBOCAT Auto catalogue your disk library
U989 AUTOBOOT DISK MAKER V4 -very useful
U993 IMAGINE STUDIO V2.(2D) The best PD image (picture) processor available rival even the commercial costing hundres of pound. (not k1.3)
U969 POWER-CACHES Speed up disk loading.Accesses
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U971 HARD-DISK & FLOPPY DISK DOUBLER (Epu)notWB1.3
U973 CHEAT FOR 800 + GAMES, LEVEL CODE V3.3.(2)
U974 HD GAMES INSTALLER 2 install tops games to HD. EG.ZOOL2, Rise Of the robot,Mortal Combat2 & more
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U979 ICON ACHRIVE(3) 1000's of normal Icon(any Amiga)
U994 TEXTURE STUDIO. Render Various Texture for use with Imagine 3 ect req FPU.(not 1.3)
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U996 BOOKIE BEATER- gambling programe to win bookie
U997 HD GAME INSTALLER 3. install more game to HD
U998 EXOCTIC RIPPER V3.b Latest ripper
U999 HD MEMORY (new collection) require MMU
U1000 MAGIC OPUS VOL 2 & 3 (2D) more Dopus buttom
U1001 CAR DATA ANALYST-check your car performance
U1002 TURBO CAT-(WB 2&3 only) catalogue creator
U1003 LOTTORY WINNER V2-new version
U1005 BASIC-ELECTRONIC-Teach all about eletronic
U1006 LOTTO LUNACY V2 Update latest lottery predictor
U1007 ALL NEW HARD-DISK & FLOPPY DISK TOOL 2 (2)
U1008 HARD-WARE PROJECT 2 (2) Build dozen of project even how to fit Amigas in a tower case
U1009 DATA ALERT 3-explain why your computer crash
U1010 WB2.04 INSTALLER-install A500+/A600 to HD

PUZZLE GAMES II

Massive collection of the best puzzle games ever released including some of the classics like Nubic Cube, Picture Puzzles etc, much too many to list. Very popular.

5 disk pack only £4.99





ARCADE GAMES II

COLLECTION OF THE VERY BEST SHOOT EM UP MUST FOR ANY GAMES PLAYER

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BOARD GAMES II

The very best board games ever released. This pack contains the very latest, CHESS, CHECKER, SCRABBLE, MONOPLY & DOMINOES recommended.

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5 disk pack with all the latest printing programs specially designed for printing out high quality documents, text & pictures etc and it is even able to print out A5 Booklets (very handy). Easy to use.

A must for any Amiga owner with printer.

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GAMES

G222 MEGA 21 GAMES amazing 21 games
G235 DRAGON-CAVE brillant 3D puzzle games
G240 QUADRIX very addict excellent
G242 TAKE EM OUT like to Operation wolf
G253 DESTINE MOON BASE Arcade conversion
G272 TANK BATTLE 2 player tank battle game
G278 ARCADIA the best ARKNOID clone
G300 Q-BOID cross TETRIX and INVADERS.
G303 DIMENSION X 2 player LIGHT CYCLE GAME
G310 NEBULAR Excellent 3D shoot em up
G316 GALACTIC Excellent 8 levels arcade
G317 HYPER-BALL Speed ball +level editor
G320 GHOST-SHIP Very good 3D adventure
G325 BATTLEMENT hunch back of notcha
G326 MEGA GAME COLLECTIONS III 3 top games
G329 MADONNA NUDE PUZZLES for 18+ only
G331 GRAVITY massive space exploring game
G333 CYBER-NETIC Brillant 8 way blaster
G334 DONKEY KONG -(A1200 order code AGA296)
G335 CRAZY SUE II- best platform to date
G342 SUPER SKODA CHALLENGE (& track editors)
G344 STAR-TREK similar to RAID2 but harder
G355 DOODY very cute & extremely addict
G356 WONDER LAND amazing graphic recommed
G362 DELUXE PACMAN + best pacman ever release
G367 CARD GAMES collection
G368 WIZARD-DOMAINS-dugeon type games
G370 KALATRIZ (notA1200) arcade tetriz clone
G373 AIR ACE II Very playable shoot em up
G384 OTHELLO best PD version
G386 MOUSE IMPOSSIBLE very addictive puzzle
G390 TETREN most polish Tetriz ever release
G392 STRIKEBALL brillant base ball clone
G399 TRAILBLAZER brillant (not A1200)
G400 FIGHTING WARRIOR like street fighter
G404 DOMINOES only one of it kind on PD
G406 TOTAL WARS -strategy like chess in space
G411 BATTLE CAR 2- 3D car racing
G431 NESTER CARD GAME- hours of fun for a quit.
G435 ROULETE amercan roulete excellent
G438 TRAILBLAZER 2 C64 conversion
G441 E-TYPE 2- very good asteroid great graphic
G443 OLEMPIAD DISK (2D) Olympic sport events
G445 DESCENDER GAME tank, search & desender
G446 OBLIDOX excellent Arcade/Puzzle game
G448 PARACHUTE JOUST quite playable
G455 CASTLE OF DOOM VG graphic adventure.
G460 WIBBLE WORLD GIDDY Large platform game
G467 CASH FRUIT- good fruit machines
G478 AMOS CRICKET cricket games
G488 EXTREAM VILONCE 2 player battle out
G489 ENGIMA MACHINE very challenging puzzle
G490 MEGA BALL 2 very playable break out clone
G491 BOUNCE & BLAST brillant platform 10/10
G492 ZOMBIES & DEFENDER 2 fantastic games
G494 MERCANERY SIMULATION 3D wars games
G499 LIFE -simulation very interesting
G500 TRANSPLANT dozen of level fast arcade.
G501 KLAWZ THE KAT-great platform games
G511 HIGHWAY HELL like SPY HUNTER on the C64
G531 OPERATION FIRESTORMS-brillant
G534 CASTLE KUMQUAT similar to Alien breed
G535 BLACK DAWN brillant graphic adventure
G538 MORIA 5.4 The latest Dungeon & dragon
G539 BRIDGE Good version of bridges
G540 ORK ATTACK bloody adventure

101 GAMES

PRICE ONLY £9.99

Brilliant collection of over 100 of the very best of PD games includes INVADER 2, Tetris, Monopoly etc. Much too many to list. Very easy to use menu system. Most games come with full playing instructions.

MUST FOR ANY GAMER PLAYER.

COMPATIBLE WITH ALL AMIGAS



All games are selectable from an easy to use menu & most games come with full playing instructions

G541 REBOUNCE 2 player futuristic breakout
G542 ROAD TO HELL brillant car racing
G544 SUPERTOM CAT New vertical shoot em up.
G545 KUNGFU CHARLIES mix with platform brill.
G546 RAID 4 latest vertical scroll shoot em up
G546 QUIZMASTER very good quiz programe
G552 ELEVATION games base on lift ??
G560 IMPERIAL WALKER -Base on STAR WAR games
G567 STARBASE 13 (2D) Bril like MONKEY ISLAND
G657 AMOS LOADSA MONEY best FRUIT-MACHINES
G659 MR MEN OLYMPIC (2D) many event to complete
G660 4 L.C.D DREAM 4 small hand held games
G664 NEIGHBOUR GAMES (2D) base on the TV series
G665 TIME RUNNER (WB2/3) Brillant graphic
G667 GOLF (2DISK) One of the first & decent GOLF
G668 AMOS CRICKET 2 New Amos cricket simulator
G669 MUGSY REVENGE gangster graphic adventure
G672 JIGSAW (2DISK) very playable jigsaw games
G673 BOBBY GARDEN + DIGGER (NEW) Brillant
G674 HIGH OCTANE Fast car racing (notwb1.3)
G675 TIME RUNNER amazing graphic adventure
G680 SPACE-INVASION 2 - Fantastic Galaxain
G681 AUTOMOBILES - PD version of SKID MARK bril
G682 BANDIT MANIA - Brillant fruit machine demo
G685 PROJECT BUZZ BAR -Brillant asteroid
G689 GUN FIGHT (not A500(1.3)
G690 THE REAL POPEYE 64 (a500 1.3 only)
G692 SYSTEM DEFEND-Brillant Defender clone
G698 AMIGA-BOY-Game boy emulaor + tetriz
G732 DETHELL IN SPACE. Recommed.
G735 OVERLANDER Brillant arcade MOON ALERT
G737 SERIOUS BACKGAMMON The best in PD BG
G771 STAR WOID (2 Disk) brillant Thrust
G772 UN-SENSIBLE SOCCER very similar to Sensible scoccer games. RECOMMEND

101 GAMES 2

PRICE ONLY £10.99

This is the very latest all new 101 games compilation pack 2 containing some of the very best in PD games like Zeus, Wonderland, Dragonfiles etc. Much too many to list.

COMPATIBLE WITH ALL AMIGAS



All games are selectable from an easy to use menu & most games come with full playing instructions

G773 FRUIT MANIA -Brillant Fruitmachine.
G774 TRICKLE TREAT -like DOOM on the PC
G775 FOOT-BALL MANAGER-new version
G782 SOLO ASSAULT 3D like Wing Commander
G783 SEED OF DARKNESS-Brillant graphic adven
G784 NANO FLY Superb explore game RECOMMEND
G785 THE GREAT GOLD RAID- very addicted
G787 ANT WAR V1.9 (LATEST) not 1.3
G788 ZENO-MORPH -Great grahic
G789 TASK FORCE very good MIND SHADOW clone
G790 GREEN FIVE Amazing 3D graphic like
G791 PROFFESIONAL BINGO CALLER
G792 MARTIAL SPRIT like Street fighter II
G798 6 EXCELLENT CARD GAMES collection
G809 BLITZ 2 fast action shooting games
G810 EXIT 13 Brillant puzzle
G811 TEMPORAL MISPLACEMENT-graphic adventure
G812 ADAY AT THE RACE-V.Goodhorse racing games
G820 BOULDER ORIGINAL with 80 level
G821 BOULDERDASH cave/level Construction kit
G822 BOULDER COLLECTION 2/3 160 level (2disk)
G839 BOULDER PACK with 640 level on 8 disk
G860 ALIEN NET WORK-new Spacing invader
G862 BATTLE FORCE excellent text adventure.
G863 GNU CHESS the best chess with 10 level
G868 SWORD OF YIGG Graphic adventure
G867 POWER-TETRIZ for 1 or 2 player
G868 SUPER SMASHING TETRIZ
G870 CHESS II & CHECKER One of the best around must for all CHESS or CHECKER player
G871 GRAVITY FORCE 2 1 or 2 player thrust clone
G872 SCHNEBITZ Commercial quality puzzle games
G875 DELEXE GALA v2.3(new) add new feature & bouns gamme + 2 player RECOMMEND. get it now
G876 THE KRILLIAN INCENDENT like ELITE2/Epic
G878 QUANTUM-Maze colect & escape type games
G879 RAG TO RICHES - like MONOPLY

NEW 101 GAMES PK 3

New 101 pack 3 contains over 100 games, runs on all Amigas, only £11.99 offer buy any 2 packs together & receive a free £4 token for use with next order. This offer cannot be used with any other offer current & subject to condition apply.

G884 WIPE OUT-mindless blasting gamse
G885 GODZILLA Another shootem up
G886 SUPER MEGA FRUIT- All new Fruit Machine
G888 DRIVING MANIAC 3D (fill vector like Indi500) car racing- very fast. RECOMMEND
G889 PLANET FALL - Luner Lander clone
G891 BUCK TOOTH ADVENTURE Very good multi level shoot/collect em up RECOMMEND
G892 PENGO 2- Maze type games. Recommend
G893 SUPER OBLITERATION Blast asteroid very similar to PANG 2 lot of weapon RECOMMEND
G894 SUPER INVASION II -New SPACING INVADER
G897 THE SHEPERD Brillant POPULUS clone. REC
G898 ALIEN GENOCIDE (2) Shoot aliens set in space.
G899 PUCKMAN. One of the better PacMan arround.
G900 SUPER-BATTLE ZONE.3D (not WB1.3)
G901 M*A*S*H a (ANTWAR 2) play very similar to LEMMING & WORM. with load of Weapon (Brillant)
G904 LAST SOLDIER (2) multilevel platform games
G905 CBBERTECH (2) exclient ALIEN BREED Clone
G906 HANGMAN any one for a game?
G907 ACE SPACE nice Platform games
G908 COLOURMANIA slide/Klatriz type puzzle games
G910 HARRY-HADDOCK- Brillant platformer games
G912 MANGLE FENDER -Brillant, Smash up other car/tank ect to win. extremly addicted. get it
G913 ARCADE GAMES CLASSIC Vol 1 & 2 (2d)
G914 HELICOPTER-play like Desert strike
G915 COW WARS. Very addicted 2 player games
G916 ISLAND -Play like Monoply.
G919 COP THE LOT Pro Latest Lottery preditor
G920 LOTTERY PROFFESIONAL This version use
G921 MONOPLY. (board games) The best version
G922 JET WILLY 3 - excellent platform games
G923 FLAMMING ENGINE-Superb car racing
G924 POWER MACHINES. Grahicaly brillant shoot
G925 SUCIDE-MACHINE Operation wolf style
G926 ZAXXON 3D Superb C64 3D blaster games
G927 BOING V3. Great platformer. recommend
G928 PUNTER-Animate horse racing games
G929 ARCADE JIGSAW (2d) include LION KING
G930 WHEEL CHAIR GLADITOR-Very fun to play
G931 NIMBLE-Brillant New arcade puzzle.
G933 BLACK DAWN 3- THE NEW BEGINNING (2) Superb 3D adventure. RECOMMEND
G934 R3 ROCKET (NEW)very good rockets games
G935 BATTLE SHIP- the finest PD version
G936 LAST LAP - Fast car racing

GAME HINTS & CHEATS II

Play your favourite game for age? but can't get to the end of level or game? Having problem with some games? 5 disk pack with 1000s of games cheat/help/level code action replay poke etc., should help you finish many games – suitable for all Amigas only £4.95.

Update & release on 28 July '95

EDUCATION

E001 KID PAINTS. superb paint special for kids
E002 COLOUR IT brillant computer colouring book
E003 TREASURE SEARCH find the hidden treasure.
E004 LEARN & PLAY I(not A1200)many maths & games
E005 LEARN & PLAY II more education programes
E006 SPANISH TRANSLATOR Spanish<> English
E008 MR MEN (WB1.3only) brillant story adventure
E009 ASTROMY tutorial on solar/star ect system
E010 SIMON & SPACE MATHS maths & simon games

E011 EDUCATION PACK 1

pack with dozens of education programs ranging from maths, science to educational games recommend suitable for any Amiga. 5 disk pack only £4.95

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esp

Ezra Surf prescribes a good dose of morale-boosting medicine to cure some of those winter blues. Come on, things aren't that bad - new projects are on the way. Even banks are citing the benefits of the Amiga

BLEAK MID-WINTER

Reading through the December 1996 issue of *Amiga Computing* two points caught my eye which filled me with dismay with regard to the Amiga and *Amiga Computing*'s future.

Firstly, the announcement that you would be incorporating *Amiga Action* with effect from the next issue. I'm not dismayed because of this decision; indeed I look forward to it. What does dismay is that the decision was taken, I would assume, because of declining sales.

This would have been bad enough but I notice with horror that *Amiga Computing*'s own sales have reduced dramatically to 22,051 for the period January to June 1996; the figure for the period June to December being 39,802. A helluva drop in anyone's language.

Are things really looking so bleak as they appear? Being more interested in the serious side of computing (although still very much a novice) I consider yours to be the best of the Amiga Magazines and have been a subscriber now for quite a few years. I would hate to see its demise.

Perhaps I'm being unnecessarily pessimistic. It would be interesting to hear how you and the rest of the *Amiga Computing* team feel.

Bill White

As most of you have probably noticed, we have had a drop in readership and this is not something unique to *Amiga Computing* either. It's a reflection of the market as a whole and the longer the uncertainty over the future of the Amiga, the worse it will get.

It's true that many Amiga owners have become disillusioned with the Amiga and have jumped over to other platforms - namely, the dreaded PC. This is especially so on the games side of things and when big name developers jumped over to the Playstation so did the players of their games.

However, the flip side of this is that *despite* the machine having being in such dire straits, we have seen a great loyalty from a large majority of users who, despite the situation, refuse to budge away from the Amiga.

This sort of fanaticism just goes to show how strong the platform remains to be. Also things are looking up with various third-party projects on the horizon. If these take off, we could see a whole new generation seeing the benefits of Amiga-based systems.



The ABCs of all the Amiga magazines reflect the market in general



ROLL UP, ROLL UP

Come on, write in you know you want to. The address as per usual is ESP, *Amiga Computing*, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP. Doesn't matter what format you choose - sweaty sock and Tipp-Ex (that's Neil's particular fetish), traditional biro and paper or a disk (saves my fingers) which we can return. Alternatively, E-mail us at ESP@acomp.demon.co.uk. At the moment we're lining up some software goodies for a lucky reader who writes in with the best letter.

AMEGA RULES

Having recently decided to venture into the world of video production, I arranged a meeting with The Business Banker at the local Barclays Bank. It was a preliminary interview, and after a chat I was provided with the fact sheets on the subjects in which I was interested.

I was reading through the Video Production Company sheet on the train journey home from work, when I came to a section entitled Start Up Costs. In this section it describes the equipment required for video production.

After explaining a video editing suite set-up, it went on to say that one would need to "buy a computer costing approx. £900. A recommended graphics computer is by Amega (their spelling, not mine), because it allows for quality graphics to be created".

It mentioned genlocks for graphics overlay, then went on to say: "Once the computer is purchased it will be necessary to obtain various types of professional video software. One basic graphics programme is called Dpaint 4 and a good titling programme is by Scala called MM300".

Now, despite their spelling of our favourite machine, (which I shall be correcting in our second meeting, it was very refreshing to learn that a business as big as Barclays Bank recognises the Amiga as a quality graphics platform. One never knows, this message may get across to other people through these fact sheets. When you consider the presence of Barclays Bank across the country, as well as a recommendation from a Bank, (which still commands a certain amount of respect even in this day and age), perhaps the message will get to the people who would more than likely be duped by a Pee Cee salesman.

I hope that this message cheers you up, especially after all the whingers and moaners.

Pete Casson

Certainly does. It's very interesting to see what other people's perceptions of the Amiga are - especially when they are positive! It's good to see not everyone has been blinded by the PC-hype.

HANG IN THERE

A decade ago, a former best selling model of a Ford sedan fell on hard times. For almost 10 years it had got by with just a few tweaks here and there every year to give the impression that it was still a modern car.

But in reality, the public began to see it for what it was - a 10 year old design that was clearly out of date in every department. A replacement model was still some three or four months away, and the opposition with its new models were having a field day at Ford's expense.

The Ford dealers tried to lift flagging sales by saying that it did not matter that their sedan lacked many of the opposition's features because it was still up there with the best. Finally the day dawned when the new model was unveiled and a sudden transformation came over all Ford dealers. Whereas before they had defended the old model, they now openly derided it and urged the public to buy the new model.

What's all this got to do with the Amiga? Here in Australia - and probably in nearly every other country, a transformation is coming over the Amiga scene. Even the former Amiga stalwarts are abandoning ship and telling everyone else to follow suit.

As late as Nov/Dec 1995 issue of the Australian *Amiga Review*, its editor and writers were urging Amigans to hang in there and continue supporting everything Amiga. There was only one more issue of *Amiga Review* after that, and it contained the news that it would be the last.

There was going to be a replacement magazine called *Multimedia Desktop and Video*, and it would have a dedicated Amiga section. Despite the promise to look after its former readers and subscribers, with only the second issue of the magazine there are less than six pages out of 80 being devoted to Amiga editorials and comments, and Amigans are being told to look to PCs as the way to go.

What is the way to go? Should we throw in the towel and go with the crowd, or hold on till the end. One only has to look to the ABC figures of Amiga magazines over the last few years to see the sad state the Amiga is in.

I believe the state of the magazines mirror the state of the Amiga itself, for everyone even remotely interested in the Amiga will buy a magazine to keep abreast of what' going on. If they're not buying the magazine it's because they're not interested, or they've gone over to other platforms.

I am not interested in following the trend. Firstly I'm over 60 years old, and my A1200 was the first computer I've ever bought - or used. I'm too old to have to try to learn a new operating system. I am very happy with my Amiga set up, and in five years time could be no worse off than I am today. Everything I want to do I can do through my Amiga, so why change horses in mid-stream?

The PC scene is currently going through one upheaval after another, and now there's talk of even more OSs on the horizon. There maybe more software available, and it may be streets ahead of its Amiga counterparts, but the prices are prohibitively high when compared to the Amiga, and how many of the features are ever fully utilised by PC users?

The Amiga maybe old hat, and as yet there's nothing available to enable it to compete with the might of the PC, but is that the way we should be going?

It's not a matter of trying to compete with the PC but in trying to establish itself as an alternative machine for a particular type of user. The Amiga has always been a specialised computer that has stood apart from the masses. So even a simple update to Workbench (v4.0), and a few new features that users are crying out for such as printer preferences, Internet capability and the like could see the Amiga once again become a machine that could attract a loyal following like it did in the past. The Amiga is dead? Long live the Amiga!

J. Coffey

Quite right about the PC following - many of them have spent a fortune on features they are never going to use. We do need, however, to see an updated Amiga and arguments will continue to rage over what needs to be changed. It's important though that it remains as much an Amiga as possible and still sticks to what it is good at - not become just another PC clone.

FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT

About your request about more Internet pages in your magazine. Yes I too would like to see more pages on this subject. I would like to see a beginners' page more easy than your 'Web Design' page. If not more pages what about a one off supplement with an EASY get on-line and web page set-up with your Christmas magazine.

I've been on-line for 12 months now and apart from the book *Amiga Surfin* from Bookmark Publishing I've not seen a GOOD Amiga mag/book on this subject, and I subscribe to five Amiga magazines (including yours).

Well, always happy to please, *Amiga Computing* have put together an article for you beginners out there. Its something we feel definitely needs covering.

There's plenty of hype out there already about the Internet - many people just want a plain simple guide to actually getting online. We hope we've achieved this...

RUMOUR MILLS

For more than three years now, the Amiga community has been hoping for things to turn out well. Lots of news, rumours, announcements, photographs.... nothing yet for us to use!

We were terrified when Commodore shut down, we were also terrified when Escom was about to buy Commodore but the whole thing was postponed over and over! We were terrified with Escom's attitude, we are now terrified with VIScorp and so on..... same story! A story that has made a large amount of Amiga users go somewhere else!

VIScorp need to show signs that they are still doing something

And the result? A handful of people still moaning about how "wonderful" their A1200 is and how powerful the Amiga is and blah blah blah! Just open your eyes and see that it will take a huge amount of invested money to develop a super powerful hardware for a competitive modern Amiga. Can VIScorp handle that? I don't think so, I doubt if they can develop a decent operating system follow up! But, could there possibly be another way?

Maybe! The first best step that I could ever think right now, is a major price-crash on the existing Amiga models. What we desperately need right now is a big-boxed Amiga! We need ZoRRo II & III slots!! If the A1200 had even 1 of them, things would have been pretty much different nowadays! Although A4000 is far too expensive and therefore Zorro users a bit scarce, we have a fantastic set of Zorro cards that really help the Amiga like top GFX and sound cards!

If the cheapish A1200 had a small tower housing, Zorro cards would sell much much more, that would produce competition, lower prices and new products!!! Wouldn't it be amazing to have a CyberVision64/3D as standard and only have to pay say stlg150 for it?! PowerPC accelerators can fit into Zorro slots as well! And I believe the list is endless!

Please manufacturers and especially ESCOM, do some creative thinking for once!

Vangelis Erotokritakis, Preston

Everyone has their own ideas on the way the Amiga should go. One thing is clear though - they really do have to get a move on and do something - anything really just to show they are still their and are planning ahead for the future of our machine.

REAL MULTIMEDIA

I have been an Amiga user since 1991, when I bought my first Amiga, an A500. Now I have an A1200 with 6Mb of RAM, 68030@5MHz + 68882@5MHz and a 200Mb hard drive.

The reason why I am writing this letter is because I wish to give my opinion about facts going on in the computer and Amiga scene.

I have used computers since I was eight years old (I am 23 now), and began with a Commodore VIC-20 with 3K of RAM. After that I bought a C64, then an Apple II, being followed by an MSX 1.0 which was upgraded to a MSX 2.0, and then, finally, I had the Amiga 500.

What made me change from one computer to another was something called "Technical Specifications", but the same is not true for the majority of people that buy computers. Stop to think what makes laic people buy them.

There are people that buy computers based on, let's say, a friend's opinion. Other ones based on the salesman's opinion. There are also those who buy computers based on a magazine's opinion. But, the vast majority of people buy the computer that "everybody has", that is , the most popular in the market.

IBM-PCs are at the position they are today, because common people are very immature in terms of computer knowledge. Common people just want to "join the computer revolution", in some cases they don't even like computers (I know someone that bought a computer just for - believe me - "status").

These completely laic people, go inside a computer store and buy the first thing the salesman calls "a computer". The chances of that machine being an IBM-PC are enormous, and after the purchase, these people will advise their friends to buy "a computer" (PC) too.

"A computer", for these kind of people, is the same as "IBM-PC". They never knew there was another kind of machine, because it just doesn't make any sense to them, as the image of "a computer" matches the one of the PC, in their minds.

When they hear the word "computer", they remember a PC running Windows. For them, "multimedia" means those "interactive" CDs that when you click a button on the screen, the CD-ROM's led lights up, and after 30 seconds loading, you hear a sound of a button click. REALLY INTERACTIVE, isn't it?

Show them SCALA (or any other multimedia package on the Amiga), with sound perfectly synchronised with mouse actions and intelligent loading algorithms. They will think it is science fiction.

On the other side of the coin, people like me and you (who have joined the computer revolution years ago, when the microcomputers were arriving at our homes and we had plenty of options), know, based on acquired-by-experience knowledge, that there are different kinds of computers, each one being better in specific tasks.

Buying a computer is much like buying a car. It depends on the amount of money you have to spend, what do you expect from it, what kind of software you want to use, what do you intend to do with it, what features it offers and how it will affect the way you use it, and as a consequence, the way you work.

The bad side of a democracy is that the best choice is not guaranteed to be chosen by the majority of people. When common people decided they wanted to use computers, just because everybody was doing it, computer industry turned into chaos. I really think this will change someday, but people need to learn, and this can take many years, as they are now at the position I was when I bought my VIC-20.

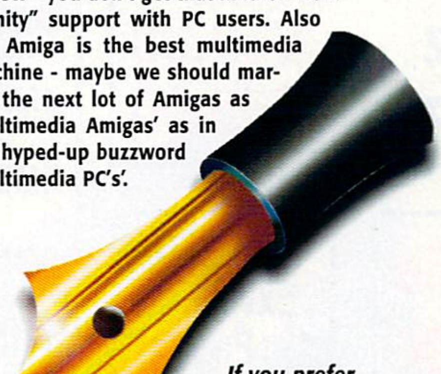
God, how I miss those "home computing" days! Every computer hobbyist does. Lucky we are because we still have this STATE OF THE ART machine called Amiga. Thanks to Jay Miner, a man ahead of its time.

And the Amiga will never die, because it has already turned into something bigger. Amiga is not just a computer anymore. Amiga nowadays means a big community of people sharing the same wishes. It has turned into a "living organism", MUCH like the Internet but on a smaller scale. This is proved by its survival.

I have been using the Internet through my Amiga. I have already accessed using high powered RISC/UNIX machines and Pentiums with Win95 and lots of RAM but, believe me, there is nothing like the Amiga. This is not a machine, this is a dream.

Luiz Gustavo Milfont Pereira, Brazil

True about the Amiga having a community now - you don't get that kind of "community" support with PC users. Also the Amiga is the best multimedia machine - maybe we should market the next lot of Amigas as 'Multimedia Amigas' as in the hyped-up buzzword 'Multimedia PC's'.



If you prefer, you can send us your letter via Email. Simply point your mailer to: ESP@acomp.demon.co.uk. You could even send it in on a disk – it makes our lives easier too. Someone has to type this lot in you know!

SOFTWARE URGENCIES

Hey, I've finally found a place where I can voice my opinion.

Well first I bought one of them there IBM PC type machines, what a piece of trash compared to an Amiga. I own an Amiga 1000, Amiga 2000 and a CD32 (my latest). Of all three I think the CD32 with an SX-1 expansion and Dataflyer IDE hard drive is really great.

Any how even though the Amiga is slowly dying I still have them. What the Amiga needs more than anything else right now is software, that's right you heard me SOFTWARE, even if we did get a new fantastic 68099 and a half processor it wouldn't mean a stack of beans without the software.

We need all us die hard Amiga computer addicts to start developing software and putting it up on the boards for free even.

The CD32 was a step in the right direction for Commodore if there ever was one. First it put a inexpensive machine on the market that was a game console that could be made into a real computer. The next step was to get the software to be developed for this machine, but alas Commodore went under.

Any how my CD32 makes my 486 25 look very slow. Now I wonder how Commodore could do that with a 14 MHz processor? So you see it's not processor speed that counts it is how the computer structure is made and the Amiga is one of the best.

Bill Gates knows only how to make junk operating systems, and Apple computers (the first multi-media, multi tasking computer so they say) should look at the Amiga and see what it was all about.

Do I think the Amiga will come back? The answer is no, and this is because there are too many computer users out there associated with the IBM PC type machines telling there friends out there what a great machine it is and these people believe them.

The Amiga hasn't been heard about in at least five years and since there are none in the stores and no software on the shelves it just ain't possible.

People ain't going to buy what they can't see and that is just the end of the story. Sorry to see that someone can't mass market the Amiga and advertise it for what it was - " The best damn computer on the market"!!!

Stanley B. Sova

acas

amiga computing advice service

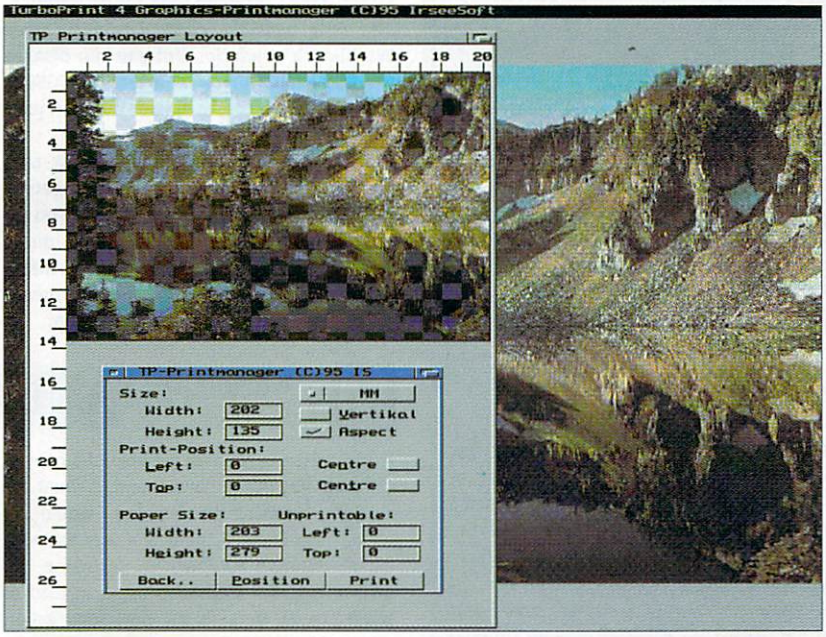
The lips sucking the poison out of your wounded Amiga, **ACAS** will have it back up and running in no time at all

TURBO PRINT

Having read the review of Turbo Print by Neil Mohr I have been unable to find any reference as to where I can obtain this program, or how much it is. Is it shareware and if so where can I download it from?

Harold Keiser, hkeiser@bconnex.net

Turbo Print is actually a commercial product made in Germany, but is available in the UK and USA with a well translated manual and documentation. American readers should try Software Hut, while any UK readers should try Wizard developments.



If you need to get the best possible colour results TurboPrint does just the job

ODD FILE SYSTEM

Please can you help me with a problem? I have an A1200 and a 850Mb hard drive. On checking my hard drive I find the following puzzling report:

```
Sysinfo - DH0//2/3 "Fast File System
DH1 - "Old File System.
```

When optimising DH1 with Reorg I get the following report about two thirds of the way through the operation:

```
Warning #503 Invalid format in data block
Old sector number 7,148          New sector
number 7,142
```

Is this a case of a little knowledge being a dangerous thing as my system is working perfectly in every other regard? I would like to know what it is all about and the remedies if these 'faults' should be correct. Please can you help?

Adrian Bernascone, West Sussex

From the Sysinfo report I assume you have four partitions on your hard drive, possibly a little over the top but if it works for you that is OK. What Sysinfo is saying is that three of your partitions are formatted using the FFS or Fast File System, and that your second partition called DH1, has been formatted with the OFS or Old/Ordinary File System.

FFS was introduced as standard with Workbench 2.04 as a replacement to the old file system, and was designed to be used with hard drives as it reduced disk fragmentation, increased the amount of available space and was faster to use for the operating system. It did not however, cure the problem of drives becoming invalidated.

It is not exactly a bad thing that your second partition is formatted with the OFS as it is a little more robust than FFS. It is however a little curious as we do not even use OFS cover disks any more. So I cannot understand why, whichever program set up your hard drive, chose the OFS just for the second partition.

All that is not too important, but what is a little worrying is that Reorg has reported a problem with a data block. In my past experience when Reorg has found a problem it ends up trashing the partition, but in your case it has been able to carry on. I would think it means a file on the drive is corrupt, in which case you could, as you have been doing, carry on using the drive as usual.

To be on the safe side you may want to back up that partition and reformat it under the FFS file system. This will get rid of the problem and you will get the added performance of FFS.

RE-TARGETING GRAPHICS

I appreciate your magazine, it is pretty easy to feel isolated as an Amiga'n today. To the questions, I do not know where else to turn at this time. I have written a number of letters to people around the world, enclosing money for response cost and have so far received no replies.

1. What is the address of VIONA Development and where can I get the current EGS software for my GVP Spectrum 28/24 bit graphics card? I have the last that GVP put out v6.2 and had no luck getting system 7.x. What is the current version? About a year ago there was a bogus version on Aminet, it was not from VIONA.

2. I have purchased the latest version of the CyberGraphX software for my board but have not installed it yet since I like some of the EGS software and hate to sacrifice it and my complex system works perfectly well as configured.

However I see more and more software that utilises CyberGraphX driven boards. Hence my last question, can my system be set up to boot into one of the systems or the other selectively? The 6.2 version of EGS seems to have taken out all the earlier versions' commands from the user-startup file, so I do not know how it boots to tell if a selective dual boot machine is possible.

Any help would be greatly appreciated. In many ways I think the A3000 was the best Amiga ever built and look forward to an 060 accelerator that will be compatible with my graphics card and case. At that point I believe I will have as nice a computer as almost anyone, using any platform.

Brlow Soper, Ph.D., Louisiana USA

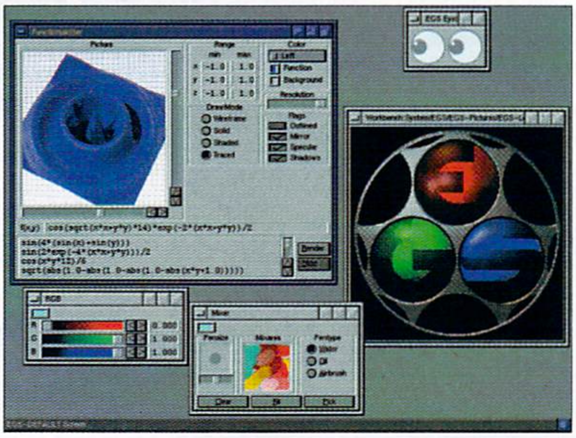
Unfortunately I do not have any contact address or phone number for VIONA and to be honest I cannot see that they would exist any more. When GVP went bust they were bought up by Power Computing here in the UK and, I think, M-Tec in Germany, mainly so they could get hold of all GVP's stock of products. You can reach Power on +44 (0)1234 273000, but as to whether they have the latest EGS software – I don't know.

The version released onto Aminet about a year and a half ago was not quite as bogus as you might have first thought. You are right in saying that it was not put here by VIONA but it does still contain the correct installation and libraries, which appear to be version 7.0. So it may still be worth your while getting the four archives.

2. A good while back I did install the EGS system on my A1200 as it has fairly good drivers for plain Amiga's that just have the ECS or AGA chipset. This was done using the release of the EGS system that is mentioned above. From doing that it looks like all the EGS files are put into a single drawer and all the config and library files are placed in there as well.

The EGS system is then initiated by a monitor driver placed in the Devs/Monitors drawer. This is really just an AmigaDOS script, but is a lot neater to have it as a stand alone monitor driver than take room up in your user-startup. It also has the added advantage that you can simply disable the EGS system by moving the EGS icon from the monitor driver drawer in Devs, over to the storage drawer.

Superseded by CyberGraphX, the EGS system worked well but the demise of GVP killed it off for good



CyberGraphX is initiated in a similar way, using a monitor driver. So you can disable either the EGS or CyberGraphX systems by swapping the appropriate monitor driver over to the Devs monitor drawer.

Having said that, I cannot see why both systems could not work side by side as they are completely separate. EGS programs look for the EGS libraries, while CyberGraphX program look for its libraries. The only possible clash would be over Workbench emulation but you can disable the EGS emulation by removing the EGSWB driver from the config drawer found in your EGS drawer.

I cannot guarantee this will work as I have never tried the two systems together but I expect it will. One last thing, if you do use the EGS archive from Aminet make sure you set the script flag in the icon information window for the EGS monitor driver, otherwise you get an error on startup.

GUIDELINES

I am unable to view AmigaGuide documents. I have followed the instructions in the Amiga 1200 Next Steps which states:

1. Open the MultiView file selector
2. Put the Locale disk into the drive
3. Work through the directories until you reach Locale:Help/english/sys/amigaguide.guide
4. Open this file and a window with buttons appears

A window with buttons does not appear but the raw file does. Where did I go wrong? I have tried all sort of variations of the above but all have the same end result, please can you help me out?

W. Taylor, Chesterfield

MultiView uses a new-ish part of the Amiga's operating system called Datatypes. These were introduced as a way to allow programs to recognise and automatically handle many different file types. So usually, and if your system is set up correctly, MultiView would normally recognise the AmigaGuide for what it is and display the guide correctly.

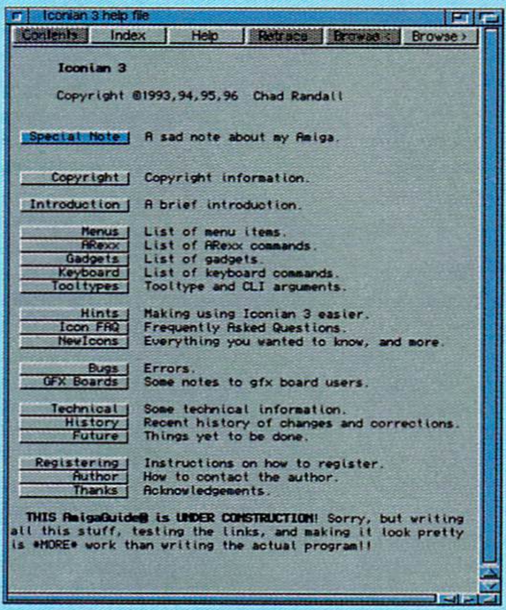
There are three possible problems that I can think of why MultiView is ignoring the fact your are loading an AmigaGuide file, and is just treating it as a plain text file.

First off, it could be that for some reason you are missing either the AmigaGuide Data Type, found in the Devs/DataTypes drawer. This file tells MultiView how to recognise AmigaGuide files. The other reason for this problem is that you could be missing the DataType class library, this is found in the Classes/DataTypes drawer and tells MultiView how to use and display the AmigaGuide file. Both of these files should have been copied onto your machine. If not, they can be found on your original Amiga system disks and you need to copy them across yourself.

Another possible reason, but less likely is that the line:

```
AddDataTypes REFRESH QUIET
```

has been removed from your startup-sequence. This line initially loads all the DataTypes description files into the operating system. If it is not run then any program using DataTypes cannot recognise any DataType file.



AmigaGuide was a lovely idea and provided a way for every Amiga program to have good on-line help

The last reason is to do with other DataTypes installed on your computer. There is the possibility that another DataType is interfering with the AmigaGuide DataType. Unfortunately I have only ever seen this happen with the MacPaint DataType which could override other graphic Data Types, but I have never seen it happen with any others. The simplest way to find out is to copy all the other DataTypes from the Devs/DataTypes drawer to the storage drawer and then reset your machine.

MIME'S A LAR

Having recently got hold of a copy of iBrowse I have found it great for browsing the Web, but I would like to know if there is a way to make iBrowse automatically recognise Lha archive files and download them, instead of having to go through the download action window every time?

I would also like to know if there is anyway to improve the display of iBrowse? Graphics look great in 256 colour modes but I find the screen update too slow.

Currently I'm still using AmiTCP but having seen the much more recent Miami and TermiteTCP I was wondering if there are any reasons to switch over to them, do they help with transfer speeds? Having gone to all the trouble of setting up AmiTCP in the first place it seems a waste to have to dump it all. Thanks for your advice in advance.

Julia Croft, Brighton

Well there are two ways to get around iBrowse asking you what to do with the archive file, the first and most straight forward is to hold the shift key when you click on the archive link. This tells iBrowse that you want to save the file off to disk and circumvents the download action window, this also works for any other type of link as well such as to a picture or another HTML document.

The second way is a little more complicated and involves adding to iBrowse's list of Mime types. Mime is short for Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions and was initially introduced as a way to encoding graphics and other binary files into mail messages. With regards to Web browsers Mime is used to allow the browser to identify what type of file it is dealing with.

POWER DRIVING

I have an A1200 with 4Mb and an internal 170Mb hard drive. After completely filled my hard drive in about six months, I came to the conclusion that no matter how many times I keep 'weeding' it out, I need a bigger hard drive.

I was going to buy a 520 Mb 3.5" IDE drive to replace my current one, but my friend's set-up that has a 75Mb 3.5" IDE drive is prone to constant power problems.

1. If I bought a 3.5" IDE drive, would I need another PSU like the Goliath 200W?

2. If I bought a bigger 2.5" IDE drive to replace my old one, would I have the same power problems?

3. Is it possible to buy a second 2.5" IDE drive and fit it inside my 1200 alongside my other one? If so what hardware would I need? Would it be recognised as DH2 as my other drive is DH0 and DH1?

Please help me with my dilemma as I am sure many of your readers have had or are going to have the same problems when it comes to storage space.

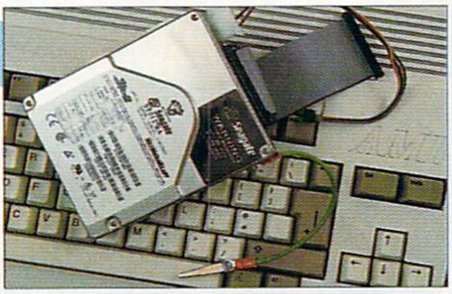
A Paice, Dunbartonshire Scotland.

To answer your first two questions, normally no. Any recently made IDE hard drive should work fine with the A1200. It sounds to me that your friend has an old hard drive with poor drive mechanism that is possibly the cause of the power problems.

To be on the safe side, a 2.5" drive is your best choice, but there is no reason why you cannot use a 3.5" drive in your 1200. I personally have a 3.5" 600Mb Quantum Fireball drive and have had no problems using it along side most accelerators. The one exception was the Apollo 40Mhz 040 card that did draw too much power, even though it worked fine with a 2.5" IDE drive. Every other accelerator has worked fine with it, even 25Mhz 040 and 50Mhz 060 cards.

If you are worried about buying a 3.5" drive, Eyetech provide a good all in one solution for the A1200 in form of their InstantDrive. Using a Seagate drive, it is easy to fit and performs very well and you should have no problems with your configuration.

I would also say that if you are planning to upgrade your hard drive you should raise your sights a little on the size you want to get. Many places are finding it quite difficult to get hold of drives below 1.2 Gb, so really you should be looking at something around this size.



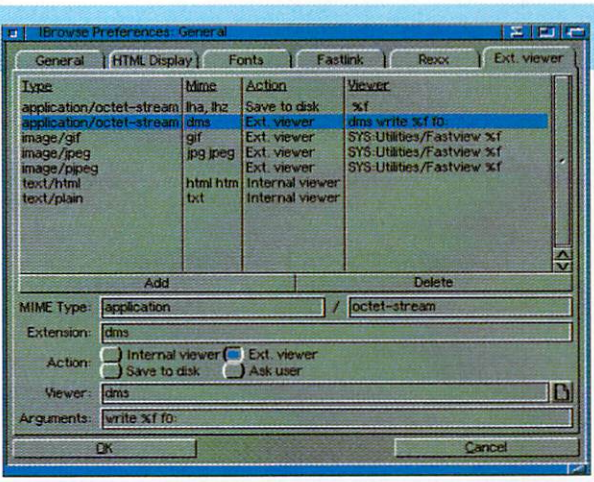
Most recent 3.5" hard drives should work without a problem in a 1200, as long as you have a fixing kit

To answer your last question, it is possible to add a second IDE drive to your A1200 but really I would not recommend it, unless you fancy fiddling around with cables inside your Amiga. If you did want to add a second drive it would have to be cased externally and you would more than likely need a separate power supply to power it, again Eyetech sell this sort of kit in any configuration you need.

GE ONE

As standard iBrowse has been set up to handle the basic file types such as Jpegs and Gifs but does not have too many more so it is always a good thing to know how to add new types. Officially there are only seven Mime types – application, audio, image, message, multipart, text and video. These are then divided again into specific subtypes such as Jpeg for image and Mpeg for the video type.

To allow iBrowse to automatically download Lha files you need to add a new Mime type, in iBrowse go to the general preferences and select the external viewing tab. Select add and in type put *application* and for the subtype put *octet-stream*. Next in the extension gadget put *Lha Lzh*, as these are the normal file extensions for Lha files, you may also want to add Lzx to the extension list. Another thing to do here is add another *application/octet-stream* entry and now instead add *DMS* as the extension. Select the ext. viewer button, add DMS as the viewer and in arguments put *write %f df0:*. If you now come across a DMS when using iBrowse, by clicking on the link, it will automatically download and extract the DMS file onto a floppy disk in DF0.



Adding new Mime types to iBrowse is so easy, even I can do it

This should show you the basics of adding new Mime types, and how you can link them to external applications. The octet-stream sub-type applies to any binary file that is not recognised by the browser. AWeb users can also do the same as both iBrowse and AWeb have an almost identical interface for adding Mime types.

On the display side, currently a patch is available to upgrade you existing version of iBrowse to version 1.02 which apparently has a better palette and so improves the look of the graphics and makes things look a little better on screens with few colours. Also a new option has been added to let you view graphics as grey scale. This means on a 32 colour screen you get a good grey scale display while keeping the speed of the 32 colour screen and there is the possibility of increased Jpeg decoding speed.

On the TCP side of things you are probably best sticking with your AmiTCP installation. TermiteTCP and Miami do provided a much, much, much easier interface, allowing you to configure them, but you are not going to see any real speed improvement using TermiteTCP or Miami and also, if you are using an Internet account with a SMTP mail server you are defiantly better off sticking with AmiTCP, at the moment anyway. As you would have no way to retrieve your mail, unless someone out there knows different.

Jargon box

Partition - A hard drive can be split into smaller sections known as partitions. Even though they exist on the same drive they are treated as separate drives

RTG - ReTargetable Graphics, the ability of an operating system to display graphics regardless of the display device

EGS - Probably stands for something, was a retargatable graphics system provided with GVP's graphics cards and provided its own GUI

CyberGraphX - The most widely used RTG system on the Amiga was specifically designed to be used with Phase5 Cybervision boards

ECS - Enhanced Chip Set, the Amiga custom chipset first found in the A3000 and then the A500 plus and A600

AGA - Advanced Graphic Array, the custom chipset found in the A1200 and A4000 and soon in VIScorp's set top boxes

acas

Do you have a problem? Do you sometimes find yourself poised over your Amiga with axe in hand, spouting profanity at the stubborn refusal of your software or hardware to behave in the coreect manner?

Well, calm down and swap the axe for pen and paper, jot down your problems, along with a description of your Amiga setup, and send it off to Amiga Computing Advice Service, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. Alternatively you can e-mail us at ACAS@acomp.demon.co.uk



C programming Part 1

C for yourself

Paul Overaa starts a new programming page aimed at helping you take those first steps into the world of C programming

C is one of the world's most popular computer languages and is used to write everything from operating systems and major database packages to disk copying utilities, graphics programs and wordprocessors.

It is powerful, fast and lends itself well to producing code that is portable (in other words can be run on many other types of computer with little or no change being required). If you've only had experience with languages like ARexx, the most immediate difference you'll encounter will be in the mechanics of getting a C program up and running because C is a compiled language.

High-level computer languages are designed to make life easier for us humans but, before such programs can run, they need to be translated into instructions that the Amiga's microprocessor can understand.

There are two ways of doing this: The translation can be done as the program runs using an 'interpreter' that reads the program line-by-line, works out (ie interprets) what needs to be done, and then executes a pre-defined segment of machine code to carry out each task.

This is what ARexx does and the approach certainly has advantages during development – because programs can be executed the moment they have been written and changes also are easily made.

The big disadvantage, however, is that interpreters are slow and it's easy to understand why. Supposing you've got a loop of instructions that are going to be executed 500 times. Each time the interpreter reads through the loop it has to re-interpret those instructions. Obviously it would be far better if the translation to machine code was carried out before the program was actually run... that way translation would occur just once and the speed penalty of interpretation could be eliminated altogether.

This is exactly what a compiler does – it reads a source file, which is just the name given to a text file representing your program, and translates it into a form that can be executed directly!

The price paid for using the compiler approach is that you lose some flexibility. You cannot, for instance, sit down, type a few lines of code and then execute them directly as with an ARexx program. Instead a number of distinct steps have to be carried out and you've got to be happy about the general form of these arrangements before you can successfully create even the simplest C program. Our main job this month is simply to set the scene in this respect.

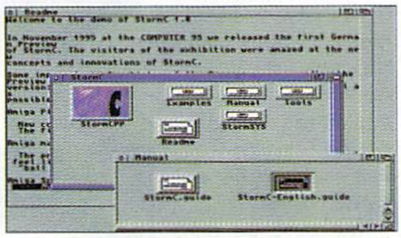
Creating a C Program

To write a C program you need a text editor. Any will do but all commercial C compilers do, in fact, come with their own editors and, initially, it's best to stick with the one provided. By convention incidentally, C source files tend to be given the filename extension .c (for example test.c) and most compilers expect such an extension to be present.

The file the compiler creates as it reads the source text file is called an object code module and it usually has a '.o' filename extension. If the source being compiled was called test.c, for example, the compilation process would produce a file called test.o! It's not runnable however – even though the object code file contains the code generated from your source it also has references to all manner of standard tasks such as writing to the screen, getting input from the keyboard, etc.

The code for these sorts of operations is stored in separate files called libraries and it's the linker's job to search for all the functions needed and combine, ie link, them to produce a runnable program.

If at any stage errors are detected, the compiler or linker will report them. If this happens you'll have to stop, re-use the editor to correct the errors, and then start the compilation/linking process again.



If you've got at least 3Mb of ram and a hard disk, go for the Storm C demo!

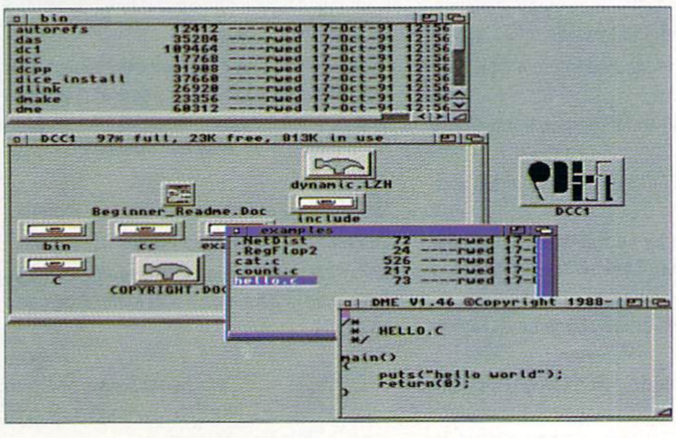
Getting Ready to Roll

One point you ought to be aware of right at the start is that writing a program using a compiled language requires proper preparation. You don't just sit down and start typing in the hope you'll get it right eventually. All you'll learn by adopting this approach is that compilers can deliver an awful lot of error messages. With a bit of advance planning however, things will go much more smoothly.

By the way, to get the most from next month's instalment you'll need an ANSI C compiler. But don't even think about buying one yet – plenty of demos are available that can get you started (the time to invest is once you have some experience and feel that C is the language for you).

If you've got a hard drive and at least 3Mb of memory available, the cut-down version of Storm C, given away with issue 100 of *Amiga Computing*, will be suitable. If you haven't got a hard disk or sufficient memory, get hold of the Dice C demo (available from most public domain libraries or downloadable from Aminet).

Print out and read the intro doc files by all means but don't worry too much about anything that seems complicated. And don't panic either – next month we'll tell you exactly what needs to be done in order to compile and run that all-important first program!



Floppy disk users will also be able to follow the tutorials by getting the demo version of Dice C!

Harv Laser takes a trip to the latest Video Expo

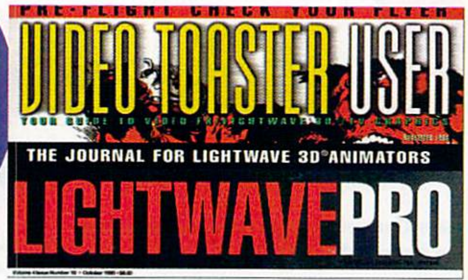
Video Nation

It was with a bittersweet taste in my mouth that I set off in my car one brisk morning in early Nov '96 for the hellish 40 mile drive from my South Californian home to the Universal City Hilton Hotel. Doing battle with L.A.'s finest kamikaze drivers is not the kind of activity that puts one in the best of moods, but hey, if there's a trade show or expo that near to me where Amigas are actually on display, I'm there, Beavis.

I had mixed emotions about this expo for a number of reasons. First, I had been the "Webmaster" of the Video Toaster User (VTU) Web site for the past year. However, I lost that job (and the modest income it brought in) when AMG Inc. (the small publishing company who grew VTU and its sister LIGHTWAVEPRO from a tiny newsletter called "BreadBox") was bought out by the multi-national media giant, Miller Freeman Inc. in late Summer.

At first it was thought the VTU site would stay up and just change servers (due to its host, Portal Information Network's shutdown in early October). But then word came down to me that MFI had decided to take it in house and do the site themselves. Thus endeth my first paying Web client.

Next came the move that shocked the Toaster/Lightwave community: After publishing a few issues of VTU and LWPro under its own banner and after only three months of ownership, MFI decided to stop both magazines cold. The monthly VTU and LWPro would now become twice-yearly inserts bound into MFI's other acquisitions: DV (formerly Digital Video), and 3D Design.





One of the many practical demonstrations performed throughout the VTU Expo

This leaves the USA with exactly ONE Amiga-specific magazine published here – Amazing Computing. Although LWPro carried few ads, VTU carried many and thus many Amiga-centric companies have lost an important venue in which to announce and blurb their products and get them reviewed.



AntiGravity were happily shifting plenty of Amigas during the show

Ironically, here I was, heading to a show that was named for a magazine which had just ceased publication. But like I said, I had to go – Amigas were there! With the demise of both AmiExpo and the WOA shows in America, the VTU Expo has become virtually the only commercially-sponsored show with any Amiga action at all. (There are others, albeit much smaller, sponsored by user groups, notably in Cleveland Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri, and Amiga shows still continue to be held in Canada). This was the third VTU Expo. They've all happened in the same opulent Hilton hotel ballroom and adjoining conference rooms.

For four days, one could immerse oneself in speeches, seminars, forums, classes and manufacturers' exhibits of all things relating to NewTek's Video Toaster, the Toaster Flyer and LightWave 3D. The main centre of action was the exhibits hall where 30 vendor booths ranging from single tables, to the large centre piece attraction, NewTek, held sway.

Since LightWave has been ported to other platforms, VTU Expo is not an Amiga-only show. There were many demonstrations of high-power Pentium and SGI and DEC Alpha machines on which LW3D runs and demos and sales of a lot of third party software add-ons and plug-ins to support LightWave.

The show is held in the Hollywood Hills because that's where the bulk of West Coast USA television and movie production companies are – many of them use Toasters and LightWave in productions.

NewTek had no major announcements this time. But new to this year's cast of characters was Apple Computer, since LW3D will soon be available in its new Macintosh version.

Will there be any more VTU Expos? Probably.

Will they have the same name? Unknown.

Will a VTU Web site ever re-appear? Perhaps, but it'll be in a little corner of Miller Freeman's galaxy.

Harv
harv@amigazone.com
http://www.amigazone.com

Among those companies exhibiting at the VTU Expo were:

AntiGravity - this South Californian based retailer had the largest sales area at the expo. Bill Panagouleous told me they were doing brisk business selling the new 68060-powered Amiga 4060T and that model designation is QuikPak's name for it. VIScorp prefers it be called the A6000T.

Carrera Computers - showing its DEC Alpha NT Workstations now running up to 500mhz for insanely fast rendering.

Desktop Images - a frequent face wherever there are Toasters and Lightwave exhibits, these guys sell instructional videotapes for them, with very good production values.

Dynamic Realities - purveyors of LightWave plug-ins such as Particle Storm, IMPACT!, and ShaderMan.

Los Angeles Video Toaster User Group - a bunch of friendly folks who share their knowledge and interest with their monthly SIG meetings and newsletter.

Lightspeed - this LightWave-centric company has plans to produce a new print magazine to fill the gap left by MFI's killing off LIGHTWAVEPRO.

MegAgeM - Dan Wolf's long-time Amiga software company now making Toaster Flyer add-ons and other unique software products.

Nova Design - ImageFX 2.6 and the upcoming Aladdin4D 5.0, demoed by company founder Kermit Woodall and digital artist Corinna Cohn. Kermit, sporting his dashing new goatee, is cousin to Toaster wizard brothers Lee and Ken Stranahan.

T.S. Computers - Hollywood-based Amiga retailer and long-time supporter, hosted by James Nakakihara, former Commodore employee and all-around good guy.

Viewpoint Datalabs - make so many 3-D objects or models that its catalogue is starting to resemble a telephone book. Its models are pricey but the selection and quality is the best there is.

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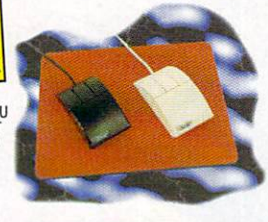
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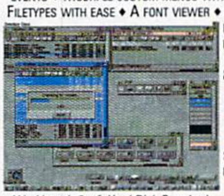
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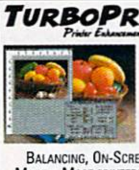
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Drawing



For many, the Amiga's main strength may seem to be just video and raytracing but it has had its fair share of DTP products, and a few years back there were a good number of DTP packages to choose from. Many have fallen by the way side now but the premier Amiga DTP package PageStream has just received an update to version 3.2 and is still widely used by many people.

There has never really been a decent structured drawing program to back up PageStream but now there is in the form of DrawStudio.

The first thing to do when you get it is to install MUI – you get the latest version 3.6 along with a comprehensive 98-page manual. Installation takes about 30 seconds thanks to the normal Amiga installer. After that you can get DrawStudio up and running.

Everything is accessed off the single main window. All the usual drawing tools can be found on the main tool bar that runs down the left side of the window. As well as the usual magnify, line, square and circle draw tools, DrawStudio has a couple of neat extras.

For starters the rotate object allows you to select a point on an object and freely rotate it about that point. The bounding box is shown and you can spin it round to any position, almost instantly. The rotate can be applied to a single object or any number of selected objects.

Another interesting tool is the modified circle that allows you to draw out an ellipse or circle then select any starting point and an end point and you have an instant curve – a welcome addition.

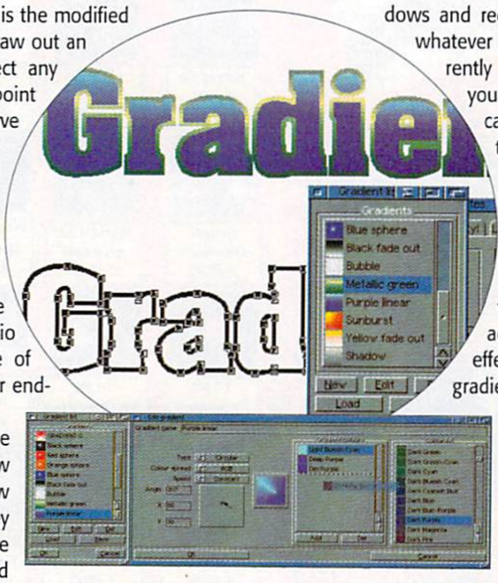
At the bottom of the tool bar are a number of icons that let you alter the basic drawing of lines and the other objects, such as outline and fill colour, line type and line end. DrawStudio gives you a decent range of arrows heads for starting or ending a line.

I would like to see a little more flexibility over how wide and long the arrow heads are as currently they are fixed to the width of the line being used. It would also be good if you could convex the inside of the arrow head allowing curved styles as well.

For more flexible free hand drawing you can use Bezier curves. DrawStudio gives you a number of ways to use these. The freehand tool allows you to trace out any shaped line you like and when finished this is converted to a number of Bezier curves.

These have a number of control points that you can move around and the curve will follow. Two more control points let you control how the curve appears. Thanks to some clever thinking the mouse pointer changes appearance depending what type of control point it is over. So you always know if the pointer is actually over a control point, and what type it is.

Thanks to a good interface design you'll pick up how to use DrawStudio very quickly. All the objects that are used to put together an image are treated the same. This allows the same windows and requesters to be used to change whatever the type of object you are currently editing. Because of this, when you have changed one object you can do the same for every other type of object DrawStudio can create.



Creating gradients is made child's play thanks to DrawStudio's powerful interface

Once you have an object you can adjust its attributes. This can mean altering the line styles, colours, and the type of fill. This is where you can add all DrawStudio's fancy effects. A selection of solid colour, gradients, patterns or actual bitmaps can all be applied to either the outline, or the fill inside of an object.

Colour selection is quite novel with a preset list appearing in a scrollable window – you can of course add your own or change the existing ones. This sort of requester is used quite a lot in DrawStudio and makes selecting regularly used colours a simple thing. As well as normal 'plain' colours DrawStudio can handle transparent colours, and in conjunction with the excellent gradient tool you can come up with some good effects.

Moving objects around and positioning them is made very simple thanks to the wireframe preview that appears when you start moving objects. If only the bounding box was shown, lining things in the box would be made very difficult but with any of the structured objects an outline is shown. Bitmaps are the exception. With these you do have to put up with just the bounding box. So if you are trying to line up two bitmaps, an amount of trial and error has to be used.

Flexibility

One thing I really do like about DrawStudio are the flexible display modes available. As you get such a good range you will be able to get the best out of DrawStudio and your system from a lowly A500 all the way to an 060 A4000 packing a CyberGraphX graphics card.

You get four screen buffer modes all of which have varying redraw speeds, displays and memory usage. A 1-bit mono mode gives the fastest redraw times and uses only 40k of memory but of course gives a crude display.

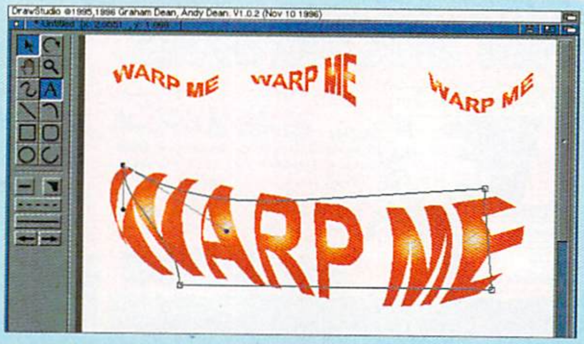
Two 8-bit modes either colour or grey scale and use around 300k of memory but give good colour or transparency displays if you use the grey mode. The 24-bit mode can use over 1Mb of memory and is the slowest to redraw but gives the best possible screen display.

To give even more choice any normal Amiga or CyberGraphX screen up to 8-bit can be chosen, and the DrawStudio display is dithered down to what ever number of colours you choose. This allows AGA owners using monitors to select a 64 colour mode so

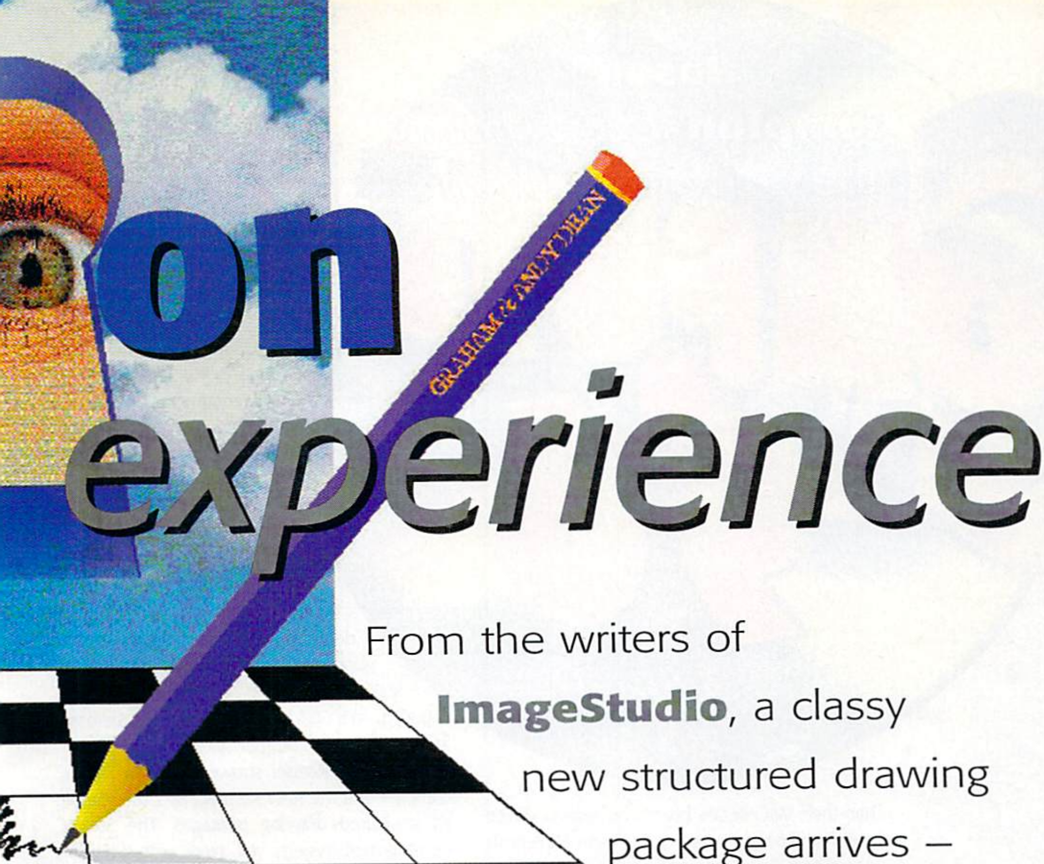
Warping

A extra tool that you can play around with is DrawStudio's warper. With a number of preset warps such as wave and bulge you can alter the amount that the object is warped.

To get more control you can use an envelope which puts a bounding box around the object, which of course can be text, graphics or a bitmap. At the corners of the box are control points that you can move to any position and these, similarly to the Bezier curves, have two points that let you adjust the amount that the box curves.

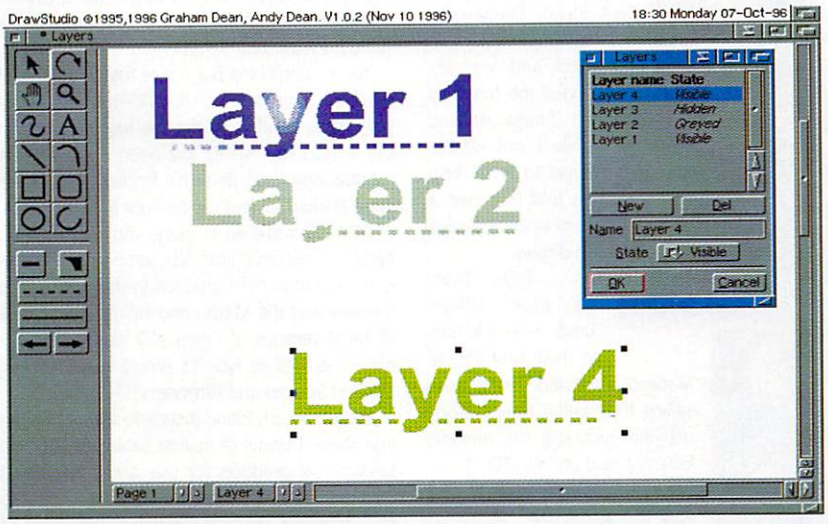


Contort virtually anything you want into all sorts of strange shapes with the warper



on experience

From the writers of **ImageStudio**, a classy new structured drawing package arrives – reviewed by **Neil Mohr**



Layers allow you to keep elements separate from each other

retaining a decent screen update speed and having a reasonable colour or greyscale preview. If only every program was made like this.

As with all good programs, DrawStudio comes with an ARexx interface. A number of pre-written scripts are also supplied and are your best starting place if you want to learn how to create your own. Mainly they just create predefined shapes but a shadow script can copy the outline of a shape and make drop shadow for it.

Currently only Abode type one fonts are supported. These are the most widely used type of fonts available, but it does seem odd that there is no support for Compugraphic fonts which are the standard scaleable variety on the Amiga.

On the output side DrawStudio is quite flexible as well as the normal Amiga print output, which is pretty fast. Pages can be saved off as either a single bitmap image, for which you can specify the size you would like, or as a Postscript file – either straight to the printer or saved off to disk.

This first release of DrawStudio is excellent with everything you expect in a structured drawing package. To get the best out of it you are really going to need a CyberGraphX card and an fast 030 but even on a plain A1200 it is perfectly usable, though you will probably have to stick with a 64 colour screen.

LH Publishing have also said that DrawStudio is going to be well supported with everyone who orders DrawStudio getting a quarterly newsletter and the authors have now set up a support web site which can be found at http://www.ajdean.demon.co.uk/studio/ds.html. It already has a ProDraw to DrawStudio conversion utility from Soft-Logik available for downloading.

Tune in next month for a tutorial showing ypu how to make the most of DrawStudio

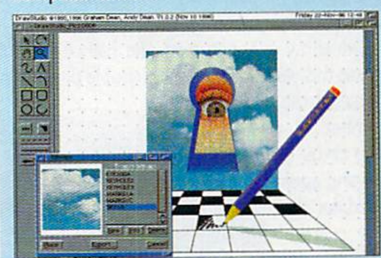
BITMAPS

Possibly the one feature of DrawStudio that makes it very powerful is the way it allows you to handle and create bitmaps. For starters you can import and export PCX, Jpeg, Tiff, BMP, GIF and your usual Amiga IFF pictures can all be loaded and saved with DrawStudio.

Once you have loaded an image into DrawStudio you can use it simply as a normal square image but with DrawStudio you can do a lot more with it. Most simply you can create a shape out of the available structured drawing tools and use the bitmap as a pattern or background image in the shape or over any text you want. You can then of course warp the bitmap along with the shape it is in.

A bitmap manager helps you keep track of all the bitmaps you have in any project. With DrawStudio you can also convert existing objects, groups of objects or an entire project into a bitmap and then save this off in any of the formats supported.

When converting objects to a bitmap you can choose the colour depth, DPI or pixel size, allowing you to tailor the file size and end image quality depending whether the bitmap is destined to appear on printed material or a computer screen.

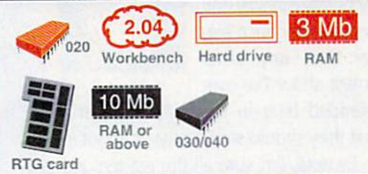


DrawStudio's bitmap manager allows you to see all the bitmaps loaded into any project

Bottom line

REQUIREMENTS

RED *essential* **BLACK** *recommended*



PRODUCT DETAILS

Product	DrawStudio
Supplier	LH Publishing
Price	Floppy £59.95, CD-ROM £74.95
Tel	+44 (0)1908 370 230
E-Mail	larry@em.powernet.co.uk
WWW	http://www.ajdean.demon.co.uk/studio/ds.html

SCORES

Ease of use	94%
Implementation	89%
Value For Money	90%
Overall	92%



Computer '96

Jason Compton reports from the Cologne 96 show

This year's Computer '96 was a continuation of the tradition of large Amiga shows in Cologne, Germany. Quite a few of the major players in the industry were out in full force for the show, which was attended by tens of thousands.

At the show, I was hosted by Schatztruhe, best known for their Aminet CD series and publishers and distributors of a large line of Amiga CD-ROMs, most prolific being the Aminet series. In fact, over the past three years, the company have made the transition from all-floppy sales to all-CD ROM sales. There does not remain a single floppy title from Schatztruhe. Launched at the booth was the new Personal Paint 7 CD-ROM from Cloanto, and the new Digita Wordsworth Office suite on CD-ROM. Back to back with Schatztruhe was their worldwide distribution partners, GTI.

In the past few years, the show has gone from being 100% Amiga to including some PC content. This year, I'd estimate that PC exhibitors accounted for no more than 30% of the show floor. Most visible was a large Electronic Arts booth promoting their upcoming line of PC and console titles, and aggressive distribution of Tomb Raider literature.

The show only occupied one hall of the Koln Messe this year, which is still a sizable proposition in itself. I can't count the number of people who came up to me and apologised for the size and attendance, saying "Oh, it was better years ago, when it was three halls, etc." My answer to them was that this show was by at least a factor of three in size and five in attendance bigger than any other Amiga show I've ever attended here in North America, and that they should stop worrying about it.



By now, I'm sure all the readers are wondering what Phase5 were up to at the show. They had what was arguably the most professional-looking booth, with about a dozen demonstration stations and a large, well furnished private meeting room, where MD Wolf Dietrich held court. He also gave personal demonstrations of the PowerUP board.

The board was running in a number of machines, and the two software demonstrations consisted of a fast Mandelbrot set generator and a partial PowerPC port of the 3D software Reflections. By rendering a set first using the 060, and then using the PowerPC-activated code, Reflections showed performance gains from 5 to over 10 times the 060/50.

The A/Box demonstration was largely confined to logic test equipment, not readily accessible to the non-technical passerby. The company also had their MaCellerate boards on display, which give high-speed PowerPCs to Apple Macintosh computers. Phase5 are still working to establish their name in the Mac market. Unfortunately, there was no CyberVision/3D on display.

PIOS were represented by Dr. Peter Kittel, and later by company president Stefan Domeyer. I was only able to meet Dr. Kittel and we discussed the future of the Amiga market. While I was unable to get to PIOS area, I'm told they had a number of BeBoxes on display.

PIOS – hosted near Village Tronic – in addition to their new line of Macintosh graphics cards were selling their entire Amiga product line, including the Ariadne Ethernet card and AmiTCP 4.

Being demonstrated was the upcoming Picasso IV, which was showing off its processing ability by playing an MPEG movie (Star Trek 6 – does anyone ever use a different MPEG movie for demonstration?) in a resizable Workbench window. Most impressive.

VT were distributing free demo disks of the upcoming Picasso 96 graphics card software, which is slated to support just about every single Amiga graphics card out there, including the Picasso line and Phase5's CyberVision. Interesting how these things happen – the CyberGraphX standard was created by former Picasso II developers. Now, the company they left are creating a standard which could supersede CyberGraphX.

I met Eyetech's Alan Redhouse who informed me of the impending demo of the SX32Pro 030 board for the CD32. I was unable to see a working demo, but I did see a board behind glass, and indeed there it was, with the legend *CD32 Goes To The Limit*. With an 030/50 in a CD32, I'm sure many out there will find new uses for the machine.

Haage and Partner showed off their StormC compiler and the new ArtEffect and DrawStudio FX structured drawing packages. The StormC development system will work with Phase5's PowerUP boards, so many people were crowding the area for more information.

If you were looking for a new tower kit for your Amiga, this was the place to be. Both Micronik and Eagle had large display areas with their A1200 and A4000T tower configurations, which I must say are significantly more attractive than the standard A4000T.

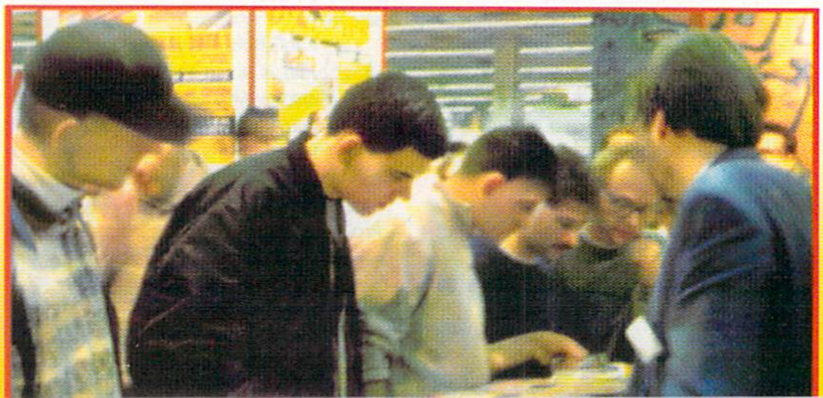
You couldn't help but notice that a number of dealers had the Amiga 1764 17" monitor on display. While it didn't receive the highest marks in the AC monitor survey, I've been using one for months now and think it's brilliant. The boxes were stacked 15 feet off the floor in some cases.

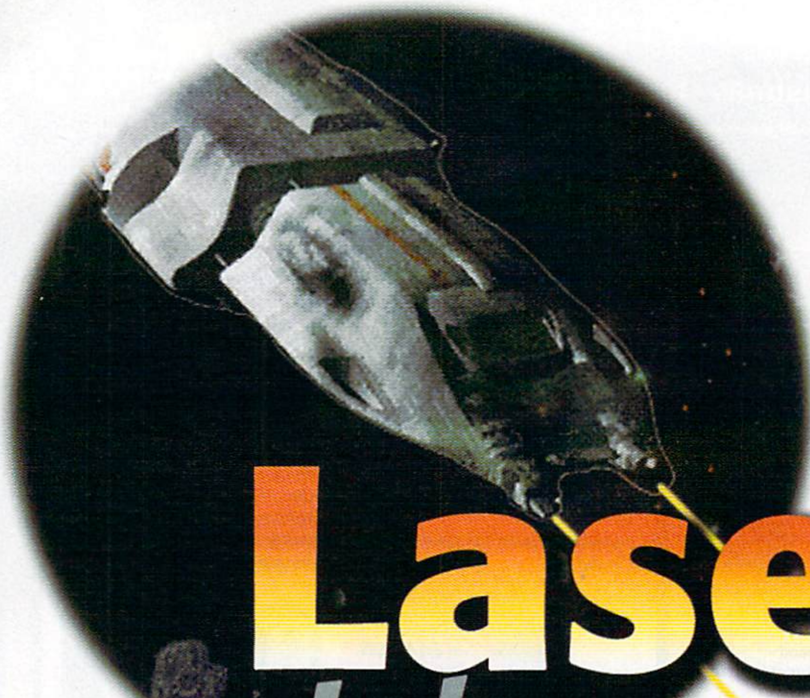
ACT Electronic were there, showing off their Apollo accelerator line. No surprises, just their entire line of popular products to show off. Across the way was the Maxon and HiSoft area, where all three versions of Cinema4D were being displayed as well as HiSoft's Amiga line, including the Surf Squirrel and IBrowse.

I've not nearly done justice to everyone who was there. Dozens of dealers brought their own selection of products for sale and I just didn't have time to see them all. But overall, I'd have to say Computer '96 was a success, regardless of past years' performances.

I enjoyed speaking to hundreds of Amiga users as well as the host of people I've only known online to date. I'm looking forward to a chance to see the show next year. AC

Jason Compton
jcompton@xnet.com
Communications Manager - Amiga, VIScorp





Laser guidance

Hugh Poynton rounds up the best of this months CD releases, including 'Women on the Web'. Poor lad

The Haunting

Direct Software will soon be releasing The Haunting, the first multiple CD game to be released on the Amiga. The game follows a couple on their honeymoon at a murder weekend (who says romance is dead? Wonder where they'll go on their silver wedding - an execution?). In true Columbo/Miss Marple/Murder She Wrote style things go wrong and somebody winds up a stiff. Its up to you to work out who or what is behind the murder.

The technical specifications of the game couldn't really be more impressive. The in-game graphics are fully rendered in Lightwave (the software used by TV companies to create the special effects on Star Trek and the X-Files), the graphics are in 256 colours and include real-time video footage and stereo surround sound. However, to play the game you will need a CD-Rom, accelerator and 6 meg RAM. Direct Software will be producing versions of the game for lower end machines such as the CD32.

The Haunting is intended to be a showcase of just how games should take advantage of the Amiga's graphical abilities. As the Amiga Director of Direct Software, Steven Flowers commented: "This is definitely a 100 per cent Amiga game. We know we are not producing any-





thing original or new in our game. We are simply taking advantage of the Amiga and the excellent graphical capabilities to produce the sort of graphics we think should be seen in not just the odd one, but all Amiga games.'

I haven't seen the completed game yet but the screen shots and sound effects from the game give me an inkling the game could be one of the most impressive Amiga CD releases in a long time. For more information phone Direct Software on 01604 722499.

Bottom line

Product details

Product:	The Haunting
Supplier:	Direct Software
Price:	£TBA
Phone:	01604 722499

Photo CD Manager

Assimware Innovations has recently launched PhotoCD Manager , a slide show and viewing programme for Kodak and Corel PhotoCD disks.

My first impression was that it was thankfully easy to use. The operating of the package is simplicity itself, with the entire screen functions taking up only two screens. The main function screen has the ability to display ten thumbnail images (miniaturised versions of the individual pictures on the CD) at any one time. To load the next ten and the next ten after that, simply click on the bank select buttons ranged just beneath the thumbnail image bank.

After this just select which slides to slot into your presentation using the 'add slide' and 'delete slide' function buttons, the speed of the slide show and how the various images should be scrolled to replace each other on the screen (i.e. by 'pulling' each other onto the screen or 'pushing').

Slide shows can be looped to play continually and you can view every slide on the CD sequentially, or view them randomly. The PhotoCD Manager also features the 'Save IFF' function that allows images from the CD's to be saved to the hard drive of, either the Amiga the CD is being played on or the CD the CD32 is linked to.

It is useful and very easy which can help bore your friends and family in a new and high tech manner. For further information E-mail Asimware at: info@asimware.com. Photo CD Manager is also available from Blittersoft.

Bottom line

Product details

Product:	Photo CD Manager
Supplier:	Asimware Innovations Ltd
Price:	$39.95 equivalent
Phone:	(905) 578 4916

AMINET 14

The Aminet CD is a collection of various tools, utilities, programs and pictures that have been uploaded to various FTP servers across the globe in the last two months. In this period it is usual for the FTP servers to receive between 600 and 800 MBs of uncompressed data. Aminet release its collections normally with a different focus on each.

Aminet 14 focuses primarily on business software, but included in the Gig plus (uncompressed) of programmes are communications, games, music and graphics and sound software.

In addition to the myriad of PD/SW and commercial demos, there are a number of full commercial programs included. The highlight of this CD is the inclusion of the TurboCalc 2.1 spreadsheet programme. Although not the latest spreadsheet for the Amiga, TurboCalc still compares favourably with Microsoft Excel on the PC. All in all a pretty useful utility CD.

Anybody wanting to order the Aminet CD compilations should send an e-mail off to: stephamo@tchest.e.eunet.de

Bottom line

PRODUCT DETAILS

Product:	Aminet 14
Supplier:	Schatzetrache
Price:	£14.95
Phone:	49 6171 85937

CD-X

In a similar vein to Women of the Web is the provisionally titled CDX also from Sadeness, a compilation of the paranormal and mysterious. Another magazine is actually holding a competition amongst its readers to decide a name and at the present time the shortlist has been whittled down to three.

As well covering topics such as UFOs and Voodoo, CDX also contains reams of information about more obscure subjects such as ultra secret military projects and the truth behind the US Dreamland base (the home of Hanger 51).

The CD contains thousands of sound samples, movies, pictures and text files. Like Women on the Web, CDX is presented in an HTML format enabling the pages to be reference cross-linked with other pages of interest on the CD.

In addition to featuring more weird phenomenon and conspiracy theories than Scully and Mulder could shake a stick at, the CD also includes information on the latest EBE and SETI reports concerning the recent discovery of fossilised life on Mars. Also included on the CD is a gallery of H.R. Geiger artwork (although looking at this and not puking does require a cast iron constitution).

Although you probably wouldn't accept everything on the CD as gospel, all the information is fascinating (however some of it is a little disturbing, such as the articles on cattle mutilation) and compulsive reading.

To run this CD on your Amiga you will require 4Mb of RAM, AGA Chipset (Graphics card recommended) and Workbench 3.0. Contact phone number and Web address are the same as for Women of then Web.

Bottom line

PRODUCT DETAILS

Product:	CD-X
Supplier:	Sadeness
Price:	£29.95
Phone:	01263 722169

SYSTEM BOOSTER

GTI's System Booster CD is a Public Domain/Shareware collection of more than 2000 professional tools and utilities. As the name suggests, the CD is short on cosmetic and fun touches; there's no clip art or games on this 600 Meg CD, only 'systems' programmes.

These programmes include a huge selection of screen blanks and savers, mouse tools and cache and backup programmes to help optimise your system. Most of the programs are ready to install from the CD, so de-archiving isn't necessary.

Despite the fact System Booster mightn't live up to its slightly over optimistic claim to, 'push the capabilities of your computer to the limits' it is still a very good compilation of utilities and tools that will come in useful.

Bottom line

PRODUCT DETAILS

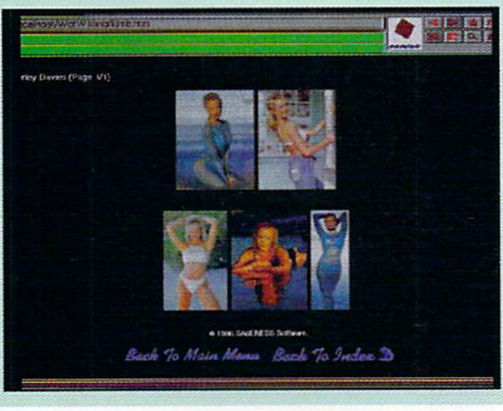
Product:	CD-X (Working title)
Supplier:	Sadeness
Price:	£29.95
Phone:	01263 722169

HELLO GIRLS!

Sadeness Software's Women on the Web CD-Rom is without doubt a very impressive achievement; 450 Megs of piccies of scantily clad famous lurvley laydees. Although no doubt incredibly sexist, the CD is still absolutely fascinating. No matter how obscure your taste in women may be, there is a fair chance they will be on this disc (although sadly I couldn't find Philippa Forrester).

The CD is produced in a simple HTML format, enabling the user to browse through the CD in the same absent minded, leisurely way you might browse the Internet. The CD is laid out so the user is presented with an hypertext alphabet. Click on the A, for example and you will be given the choice of perusing photos of say, Gillian Anderson or Jennifer Aniston (the dizzy character from Friends).

Once you've selected a subject, a complete biography and soundbites from various movies can be chosen. The biography section is almost always fascinating. I never knew that Uma's Godfather was the 60's acid guru Timothy Leary or that Anthea Turner started climbing the greasy pole to success with her hosting of a show called 'But First This'. Just think, it was only in a matter of months that she was sitting next to the illustrious Eammon Holmes on GMTV...



Sad though I may sound, Women on the Web will have you browsing for ages. The CD includes thousands of photographs, movies and information on anybody even remotely fanciable (there's even a bunch of photographs of some Star Trek actress with scales down her face who plays some sort of half lizard - you don't really get much more obscure than that).

The look and layout is pretty impressive. The main title and function page is slightly reminiscent of the 'arty' photos at the start of Loaded, black with a couple of pouty looking women on each side of the alphabet hypertext buttons. Text is in white making it very easy to read (however, call me trivial but it is a bit of a pain after hypertext has been clicked because it turns dark blue making it almost impossible to read.)

At £24.95, Women of the Web is considerably cheaper than buying Loaded and FHM every month. I should probably criticise Women of the Web for being sexist, but if I did I would be a total hypocrite. Maybe Sadness' next project should be a 'Blokes on the Web' to redress the balance, or maybe I'm just being a tedious man of the 90's.

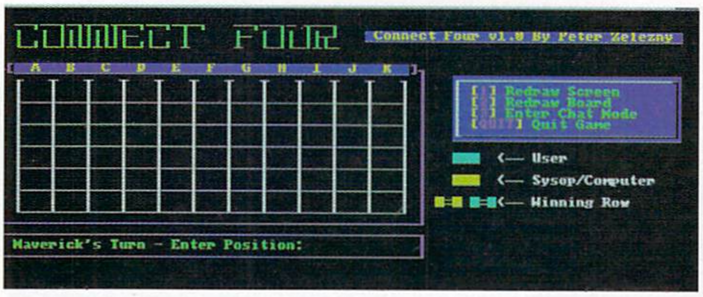
For more details phone Sadeness on 01263 722169 or have a look at a demo of the CD at http://www.sadeness.demon.co.uk

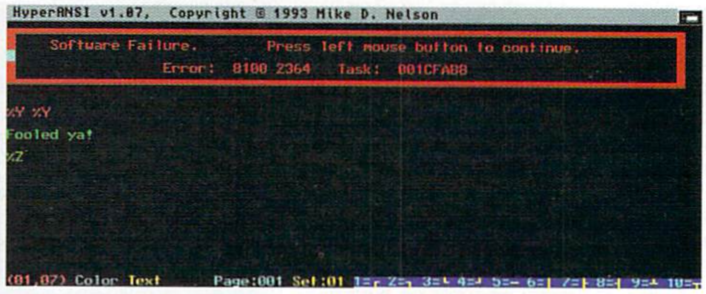


Bottom line

PRODUCT DETAILS

Product:	Women on the Web
Supplier:	Sadeness
Price:	£24.95
Phone:	01263 722169





MAX power

Launch doors while logging on, grab ready made graphics and learn the art of using SuperANSI with

Jason Jordache

Programs accessed by users or run automatically from Max are called doors. They open the possibility to give a little extra to your BBS, including online games and last 17 caller list generators. Create a directory in BBS called Doors – it always fills up quickly with who knows what junk. Assign this directory in your User-startup or, even better, track down a utility called Assign Manager.

Max uses a similar principle to the Workbench User-startup. A text file can be created with the pathnames of doors that Max will automatically launch as someone logs on. There are four text files for potential use, each searched for at various stages of logon:

```
GuestDoor.text
IntroDoor.text
BulletinDoor.text
MainDoor.text
```

If these files don't exist, Max continues as normal. Any number of doors can be run from each, but resist the temptation of adding too many intro screens in this manner – you can't blame users for hating them. No one is interested in reading through a dozen screens between giving their password and the main menu. Popular screens are those that give a list of the previous 10 or so users and quotes chosen at random.

A questionnaire door could be launched with the GuestDoor.text and would only be seen the first time a user joins the system. Try to avoid this. An optional questionnaire from the main menu is okay, but being forced to complete one is worse than wading through intro screens, to the point where some users just hang up.

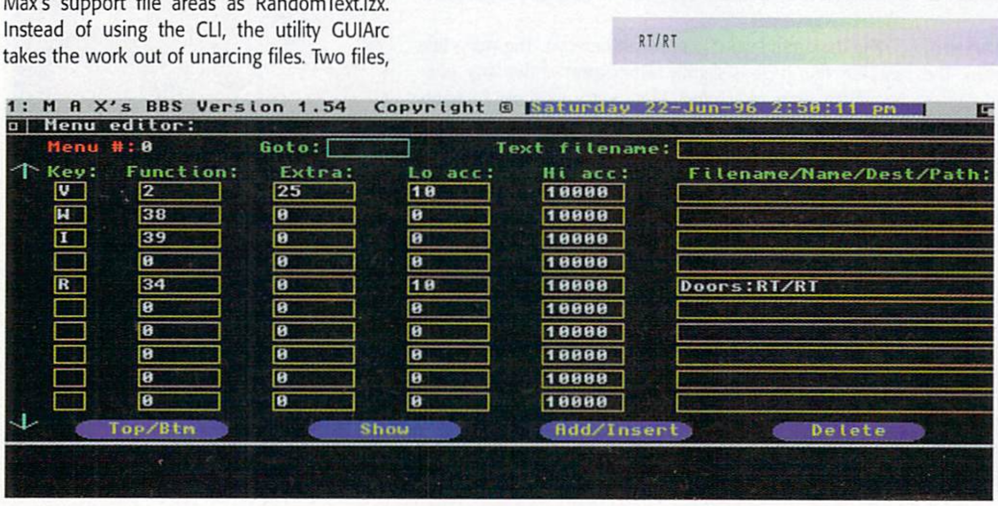
A random ANSI screen adds variety when arriving on the system. This can be set up with the Random Text door, typically available from Max's support file areas as RandomText.lzx. Instead of using the CLI, the utility GUIArc takes the work out of unarcing files. Two files, RT and RT.prefs, go in a drawer called RT in Doors.

Create a text file called MainDoor.text in the root of Doors. You don't need the traditional full pathname to where the executable of RT is. Max assumes all doors will be in your assigned Doors directory, so you can skip BBS:Doors/RT/RT. Just have this shortened version within MainDoor.text:

```
RT/RT
```

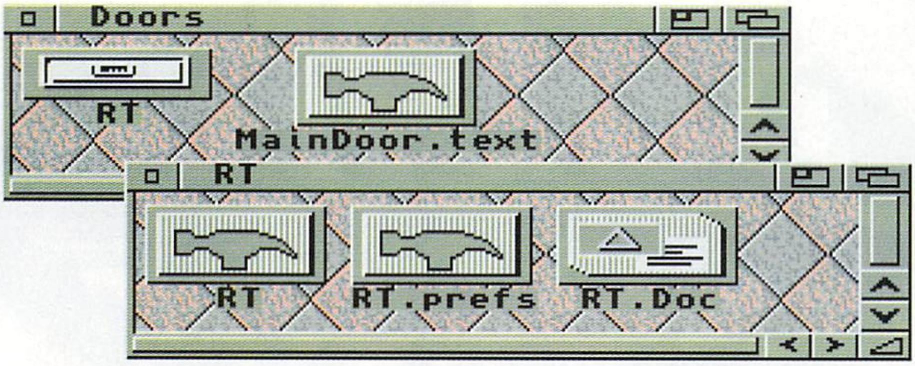
and save the file. Random Text has a text file of its own, RT.prefs, directing towards the ANSI of your choice. This one does need a full pathname. Since BBS is assigned in the User-startup the prefs file will have a similar structure to this:

```
5
BBS:Text/Error.ans
BBS:Text/UK.ans
BBS:Text/Moon.ans
BBS:Text/Error.ans
BBS:Text/AnsiTest.ans
```



USER-STARTUP

The ordinary text file in your S directory. It contains a list of commands on successive lines the Amiga executes when booted. If the file isn't present one can be created with any word processor by saving out a text file called "User-startup". You should already have your BBS directory assigned. The Doors directory can be assigned beneath the BBS assign in the User-startup, "Assign Doors: BBS:Doors"



with a carriage return at the end of the last pathname. The first line with the 5 reflects how many choices follow. If there were seven, the 5 would be changed to a 7. Having Error.ans in there twice improves the probability of it being chosen at random.

So a user logs on and Max finds directions in MainDoor.text to launch RT, which in turn chooses an ANSI at random from a preconfigurable selection, in the example above kept in Text.

There's ANSI on the coverdisk this month. Unarc the Max.lzx archive and you get, among others, the following useful with RT:

```
AnsiTest.ans
Error.ans
Moon.ans
UK.ans
Wall.ans
```

Error.ans is a favourite, and sure enough will fool the odd caller now and then. The map of England, UK.ans, I found from some BBS years ago – just edit to show where your BBS is, or not if you're American.

Longer than screen length ANSI like this is easier to edit in PlusEd. If the screen doesn't clear first when displaying ANSI created with PlusEd, just insert a character at the top left of your ANSI by pressing Control-L and save out. Though when you come to load the screen back in at a later date for editing, the symbol will have gone, replaced by a blank line, so you have to delete the line and re-enter the character.

From the top left of the Max's Configure/Menus window you see which menu you happen to be on, starting from 0, the main menu. Ten rows are visible at any one time. Each menu can be allocated any number of rows, in sets of 10. Should you run out just hit the Add/Insert button.

Hit Delete to get rid of chunks of 10, but don't delete the last set in a menu and save the config as you won't be able to get it back. You'll end up with gaps in your menu numbers, like 0,1,2,5,6 etc with 3 and 4 permanently wiped out.

In the top right there is the Text Filename field. This gives the pathname to a given ANSI screen linked to the menu you happen to be editing. ANSI filenames can be changed in these pathnames, along with the pathnames themselves, so long as it reflects the filename for an ANSI existing on HD.

From menu 0 click on Show. Here you can see the relation between the Key column and the ANSI menu screen, like the L in the Key column and the L on the ANSI. ANSI graphics have to be edited each time changes are made to the Key column so a user knows which keys to press to access functions. Unless, of course, you don't want a user to see keystrokes he hasn't access to. See *Private Options* boxout.

Find an empty row to edit – a spare one kept for testing purposes at the top of the main menu should prove useful in the future. The Key column defines which key a user hits to operate a function. Numbers 1 to 42, corresponding to various functions, are entered into the Function column to the right of the Key column. All the options are listed in MenuFunctions.text in your BBS drawer (you may want to print it out).

Menu function 34 is what we need for running doors. Install your first door and the rest are easy – all follow a similar path. You define a key for the user to press, outlined in the Key column and visible on the corresponding ANSI menu screen, which triggers the launch of a door due to 34 in the Function column. Max looks in the Filename/Name/Dest/Path field to the right for the pathname to a door. In this field you type:

```
Doors:RT/RT
```

Once running, Random Text follows its own routines to display a random file before quitting back to the BBS. Local login to see if it works.

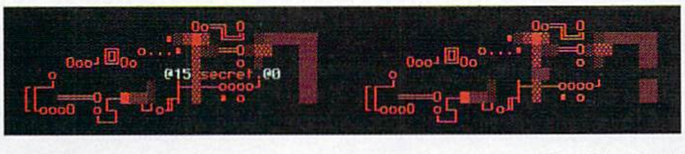
The Lo Acc (Lowest Access) field in Configure/Menus means you can bar any function from a user with insufficient access. Change the value to a 10 in the RT row and all unvalidated new users won't have access to Random Text as their access is 5. You can change these default values in the Access Level field within Configure/User Defaults.

The next door you want to grab is MaxsChat v2.60, a replacement to the inbuilt Right Amiga-I chat interrupt. There are two executables, one for users who have to give a reason for chatting, and one for the Sysop for dropping straight into chat mode. The latter can be assigned to the / key and only accessible to you by making the Lo Acc higher than users of the board, or higher than some but lower than others who you don't mind offering access.

You'll probably find most of the online games not worth the hassle. In-depth ones with rules and layouts taking time to get used to and understand work with the regular caller. MSE and Global War are a couple to look out for. For a bit of quick fun with a friendly caller, like Xenon II over Civilisation, I couldn't beat the online game Connect 4. You might find it under C4.lzx. The version I had was a little buggy but worth it and was played just before someone logged off in case it crashed the BBS.

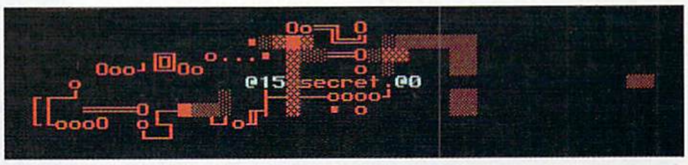
PRIVATE OPTIONS

Like the %x commands, Max has another form of auto inserts, effectively hiding parts of an ANSI display from users with insufficient access. It's done with the @ symbol followed by a value from 0 to 10000, ie @15. @ is selected with Shift-2 in HyperANSI. If you have two @@ side by side Max ignores the auto insert and prints one @.



The graphic shows how you create the effect in Hyper. On the right how it appears in Max's to a user with access lower than 15. Max scans from left to right of each line starting top left. It sees @15, does what it does, then finds @0, which could be on a different row, and returns to normal. Everything in between is removed. @ commands and those numbers afterwards are never visible from Max's.

Not only are characters removed, any ANSI appearing to the right of @0 is dragged – an equal number of spaces as removed characters – to the left, so plugging the whole.



Just prepare for this like above, by moving relevant ANSI towards the right in Hyper. Should you ever want to bypass this plugged whole effect you can use the overlapping screens method coming next month. Using the @ command means you can use just the one menu, but have it look different the higher up user access becomes.

If you stop a caller seeing an option or graphics in this manner usually you will want to edit the Lo Acc field in the relevant menu from Configure/Menus, give it a number higher than the users access level, thus preventing a user accidentally stumbling on a hidden option.



PD-meister Dave Cusick once more sifts through the submissions trough

Thanks to the wonders of magazine copy deadlines, I'm writing the January PD column in November, knowing that you will be reading it in December. If the Christmas spending spree has left your finances in a rather tattered state but you cannot bear to wait until the New Year sales for a program or two to play around with, Public Sector should offer some ideas...

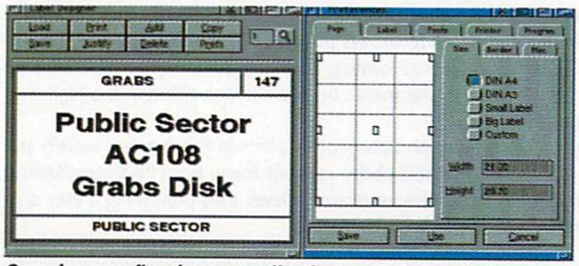
Label Designer

Programmed by: Markus Mader
Available from: Classic Amiga Software
Disk No: BU99

There is nothing more irritating than having to insert disk after disk into your Amiga simply to find out what data it contains – believe me, I know. Despite my monthly plea that all programs submitted to Public Sector be on clearly labelled disks, there are always a few mysterious, unmarked disks. Things would be so much easier for hardworking PeeDee people such as myself if only those responsible for posting these disks happened to own a label printing program – there are plenty knocking around in the public domain. Few however, are as accomplished as this one.

Label Designer employs the world-dominating Magic User Interface, the latest version of which is reviewed in these very pages. Although there is not a great deal of flexibility as to the layout of labels, it is possible to play around with size settings and various other details. The program makes use of standard Compugraphic-format scalable fonts, which can be selected from one of the several option pages.

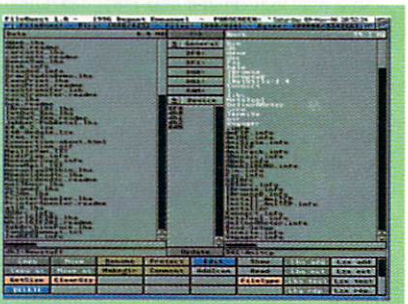
Label Designer is shareware and the distribution version does not allow you to freely print out your label designs. If you send the author the 20DM registration fee you will receive a fully functional version. For such a simple program, 20DM might seem quite expensive, but it's clear the author has spent a fair amount of time making Label Designer friendly and easy to use. If you don't own a decent Desktop Publishing package, Label Designer could well be worth a look.



Organise your floppies more effectively with Label Designer

Filequest

Programmed by: Doguet Emmanuel
Available from: OnLine PD
Disk No: OU367



And in the red corner, taking on the mighty King DOpus – the brave new challenger, Filequest

Workbench is one of the best graphical user interfaces in existence, a fact of which anyone who has ever used Windows or System 7 will be painfully aware. Bill Gates spent millions of dollars attempting to convince the world the primitive multitasking and "plug-and-play" facilities featured in Windows 95 made it the most powerful and flexible GUI known to man.

To the great amusement of Amiga and Macintosh owners (and probably a fair few PC owning Gates-haters too), Bill may yet pay the price for his irritating "Windows rules the world and always will" attitude. While he was busy banging the Win95 drum, forward-thinking chaps at Netscape nipped in and made off with the Internet, every technophile's favourite toy of the moment.

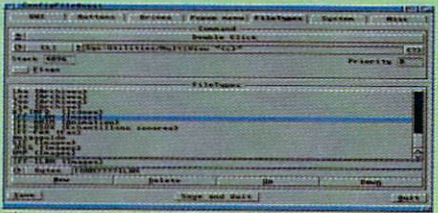
Even though after four years of neglect, Workbench remains infinitely superior to Windows, it's not perfect. Graphical representations of files are all very well for making everyday operations clear, even to beginners, but the power user can become annoyed with the lack of speed when rooting through directories and performing certain operations. Not everyone likes having to resort to the shell now and again.

For almost as long as anyone can remember, the program Amiga owners have turned to in times of need has been a file manager by the name of Directory Opus. From version 5 onwards though, many Amiga owners feel DOpus has bitten off rather more than it can chew, attempting to replace Workbench rather than work with it. Consequently the ageing version 4 is still in widespread use. Wonderful though it is, DOpus 4 isn't as fast as more recent, less powerful, PD and shareware alternatives.

In a valiant effort to combine the enormous power of DOpus 4 with an added burst of speed, the enterprising Doguet Emmanuel has produced what may well be the definitive shareware file manager. At first glance you would be forgiven for thinking you were looking at the legendary DOpus, with its classic split-screen approach and a wealth of configurable buttons at the bottom of the screen. However, a few minutes of playing around with Filequest confirms that not only does it seem slightly faster than DOpus, but it features a few handy additions such as context-sensitive floating menus.

Filequest uses the BGUI library, meaning the program itself is relatively small and there are a wealth of ways in which you can configure the interface to suit your tastes. You can even select whether you would like the program to follow the standard GUI look or take the popular XEN approach with attractive raised boxes and suchlike.

Although the program is not crippled in any way, since it is shareware you are obliged to register with the author if you use it regularly – as you almost certainly will. Registration costs US$20, and as well as getting rid of the irritating "Register Me" requesters which pop up from time to time, you will be encouraging the author to develop more top-quality software.



Filequest can be configured to handle just about any file format you care to throw at it

Fightin' Spirit

Produced by: Light Shock Software/ NEO Software
Available from: Classic Amiga Software
Disk No: G413

There are a couple of unwritten rules I generally follow when writing Public Sector. Firstly, only decent stuff makes the cut – while other magazines might think it acceptable to include whichever programs fall out of the mailbag first, I do not. What is the point in devoting valuable space to poor programs when there are other disks far more deserving of a mention? Secondly, I don't generally review early demo versions of commercial games.

Once more the computer pummels the inept Cusick lad into submission

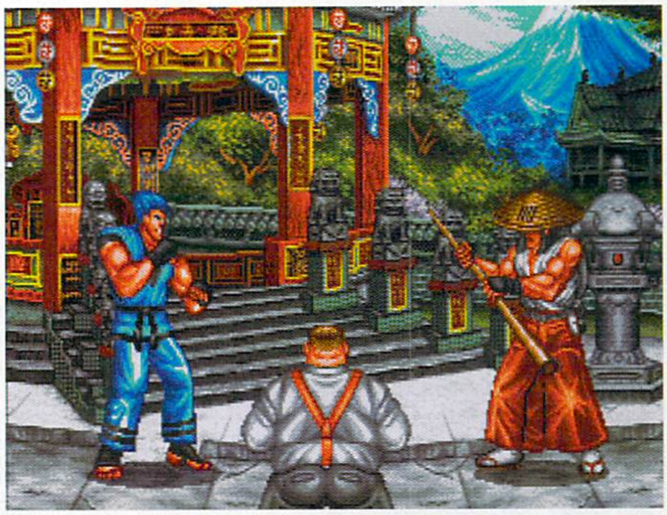


Of course, rules are made to be broken. A few months ago Public Sector featured Pepsi advertisement-cum-game which was just so bad that I felt it was my duty to ensure nobody purchased it out of curiosity, only to discover how incredibly poor it was.

There is the occasional exception to the second rule too, when I feel a game has the potential to revolutionise the Amiga games scene and any games fan worth his salt ought to investigate the demo. The first Fears AGA preview was one such disk and Fightin' Spirit is another.

Fightin' Spirit may well be available commercially by the time you read this review. At the time of writing I have yet to see the finished product, but on the strength of this demo it could challenge Capital Punishment for the title of Best Amiga Beat'em-up. There has never been an Amiga game which has come closer to capturing the challenge and enjoyment of the SNES smash hit, Street Fighter II.

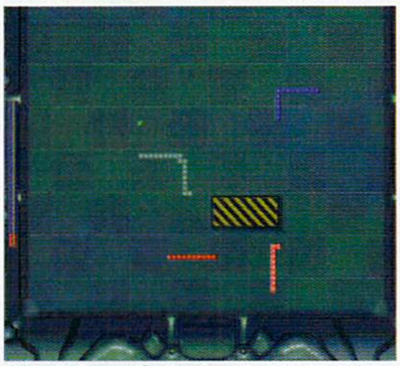
In this demo you are only able to pit your wits against a single computer-controlled opponent or engage in a one-round battle against a friend. (The full version will feature a tournament mode and a team battle mode too). Nevertheless, with beautifully crisp graphics and a superb soundtrack, not to mention responsive controls and engaging action, there is plenty to recommend here.



Fightin' Spirit: Who needs Street Fighter 2?

Sneech v1.5

Programmed by: Paul Burkey
Available from: OnLine PD
Disk No: OF276



Sneech: Fantastically playable Worms action...

Worms are not one of the greatest life forms on this fair planet, are they? Admittedly being slimy in itself is not a crime (there are plenty of politicians who seem to get away with it) but the ability to keep wriggling when cut by a large knife is fairly useless (if rather impressive). Allowing yourself to be tortured by bored kids who can't believe you really DO surface when someone bangs their foot repeatedly is just plain stupid. But worms are not all bad. As any gardener will tell you, worms are good for soil. They also inspire some programmers to produce playable Worms games like Sneech.

Sneech is not, in case you haven't already realised, a Worms game in the Team 17 sense. This is Worms the way it was in the halcyon days of 8-bit machines, with several multi-segmented creatures racing around, munching food and trying desperately not to crash into themselves or each other.

Possibly the most outstanding feature of this option-laden gem is the support for up to ten worms simultaneously, with up to six being controlled by human players. The author believes this is the first Worms game to allow so many participants and I suspect he is right.

Of course, because things could become rather cramped around the screen with six eager gamers trying desperately to control their speeding worms, up to nine of the competing worms can be controlled by the computer. Players can compete either individually or in teams.

There is a shop where you can spend the money tokens which are liberally sprinkled around the levels. The goodies available include extra worm segments, speed boosts, bombs, stunners, shields and so on. These lend an extra dimension to the game,



...with a whole host of options too

because with ten worms racing around the small playing area, taking on a worm who has recently spent his pennies in the shop is not always a wise idea.

Another string in the Sneech bow is the league option and the game even automatically backs the league up from time to time in case of a power cut.

The graphics are impressive, the sound effects excellent and as with all decent multiplayer games, Sneech should provide hours of entertainment. It comes highly recommended.

The full registered version is available for just a fiver from the author.

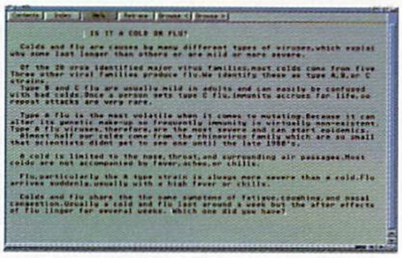
AVOIDING COLDS AND FLU

Produced by: Classic Amiga Software
Available from: Classic Amiga Software
Disk No: ED114

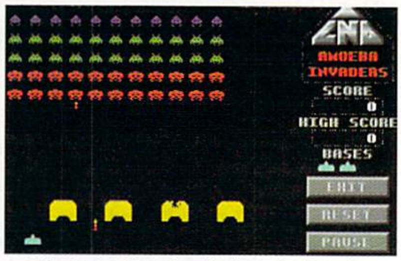
At this time of year it often seems as if the whole world is suffering from flu. Colds and flu cause more lost working days than any other illnesses and most people suffer from a cold at least once a year.

Despite this, no cure exists for the common cold, which is still generally regarded as a minor illness.

Whether this disk will actually help you avoid catching a cold this winter is hard to say, but it should certainly make interesting and informative reading. Produced by the same chap responsible for The Good Sleep Guide (reviewed a couple of issues ago), it discusses the causes of colds and flu, suggests tips for helping to keep them at bay and offers advice on what to do if all else fails and a cold gets a grip. As an added bonus, Amoeba Invaders is included on the disk too, so at least you will have something to do when your nose is streaming this January...



Read about what causes the common cold...



...or just play the classic Amoeba Invaders

FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 1996

Programmed by: Graham Hague
Available from: OnLine PD

There was a time, only a few years ago in fact, when I used to follow Grand Prix races almost religiously. Those were the days when the late, great Ayrton Senna raced against Nigel Mansell, Alain Prost and other modern day motor racing heroes.

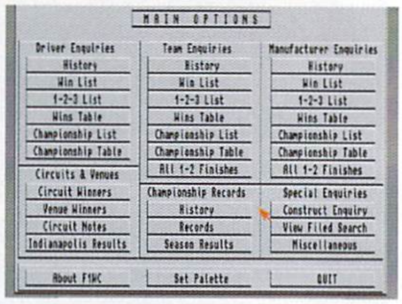
There were always four or five genuine title contenders at any one time and no one team dominated the sport in the way Williams (and briefly Benetton) have done in recent years.

My enthusiasm for the sport was probably also fuelled by Geoff Crammond's magnificent Formula One Grand Prix, which first graced our screens around that time. "If Formula One Grand Prix was a woman," I remember ranting in the pages of AC's one-time sister magazine Atari ST User, "I'd want to have its babies."

The man behind Formula One World Championship 1996 is clearly even more passionate about the sport than I once was. He has obviously devoted a great deal of time and effort towards creating the ultimate Grand Prix results database.

Yes, thanks to his sterling efforts, it is possible to find out who won the British Grand Prix in 1969, which team has won the Constructors' Championship on the most occasions and other assorted Formula One facts. The results of 597 races are covered, from 1950 to present day.

AMOS Professional has been used to good effect in creating a bold and clear interface, so even if you are rather more knowledgeable about cars than computers you shouldn't experience problems getting to the facts. Obviously this disk will not appeal to everyone, but if fast cars are up your street, as it were, this is definitely one to investigate.



Just look at all those statistics

TWISTED MAGIC WORKBENCH

Programmed by: Korneel Ketelslegers
Available from: OnLine PD
Disk No: OU 382

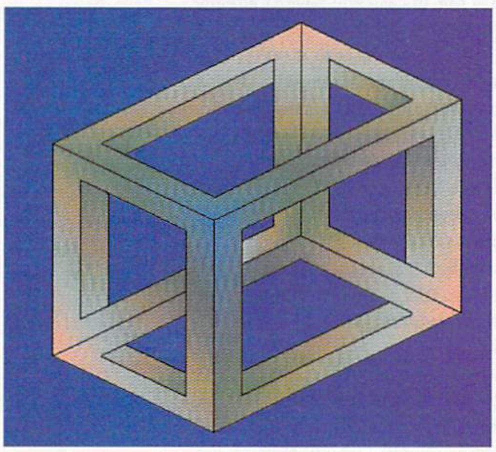
Since the emergence of Magic Workbench a few years ago, it has been adopted by so many Amiga owners that there have even been calls for it to be incorporated into the next release of the operating system. The attractive icons and colour scheme can totally transform any Workbench.

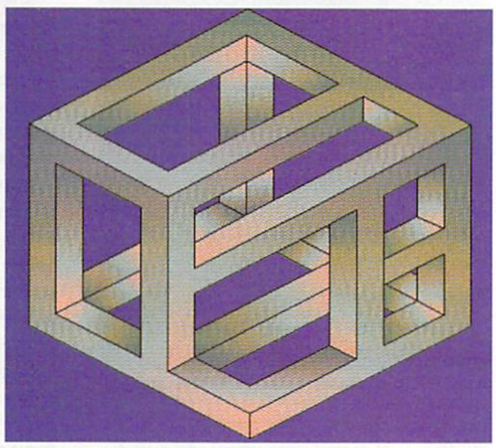
Literally hundreds of enterprising Amiga fans have already released WB backdrops and icon sets for use with the Magic WB colour scheme, so what makes Twisted Magic Workbench different from all the rest? On the face of it, nothing at all. Contained on this disk are 19 different AGA images for use as backdrops, as well as the usual "Click Me For Colours" icon and Magic WB plugs.

What makes Twisted Magic Workbench worth a look is that the backdrops are all images of physically impossible objects, reminiscent of some of Escher's creations.

There are endless staircases, tesselating letters that defy the laws of space and so on. As simple pictures these are puzzling but scarcely stunning, so also included on the disk is a program called Magic Copper, which cycles through various colours in the AGA palette. Running this program with a Twisted backdrop produces some fascinating results.

Twisted Magic Workbench is an ideal way of brightening up a dull WB screen and will certainly impress PC owners who think grainy clouds make for a relaxing backdrop. Whether you will be able to get much work done with all the colours of the rainbow slowly cycling away on your Workbench is, of course, another matter.


On the face of it, these are curious but unexceptional images...

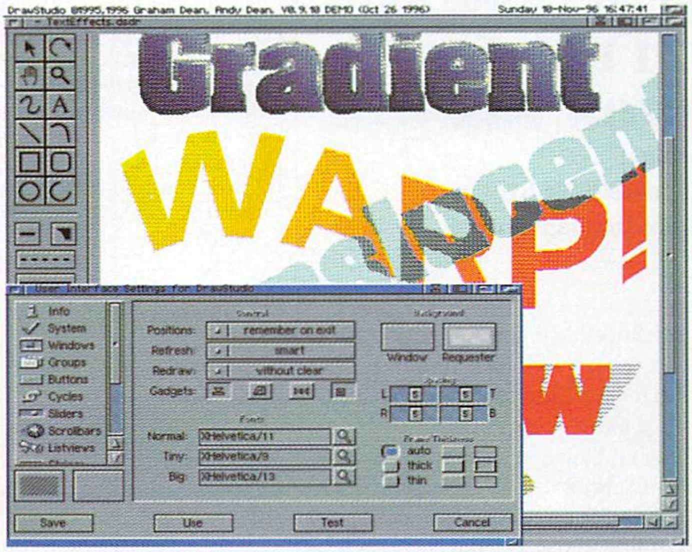

...but run Magic Copper and you'll see them in a whole new light

Magic User Interface

Programmed by: Stefan Stuntz
Available from: OnLine PD
Disk No: OU 376 A/B

It occurred to me the other day that while Public Sector has been featuring MUI applications for as long as I can remember, Magic User Interface itself has never been subject to close scrutiny in these pages. The release of version 3.6 of this universally acclaimed set of libraries therefore seemed like the perfect opportunity to rectify this unacceptable state of affairs.

I won't insult your intelligence, gentle reader, by attempting to explain what MUI is and does. You've heard it all before ("You just know, you're so sure..."). And besides, it's not big, it's not clever, and nobody's laughing.



Plenty of new programs such as DrawStudio are making use of MUI...

Let's just take it as read that MUI is probably the single most important piece of Amiga shareware ever. If Public Sector had a Utility Of The Year (or even Decade) award, it would go to Magic User Interface. What I propose to do is take a look at the improvements and bug fixes in this latest release.

First things first: if you're still using MUI 2.x, it is high time you upgraded. Although Magic User Interface has always been slightly slower than other interface libraries such as ClassAct, version 3 is far faster than version 2, not to mention a lot more stable. Upgrading can give older programs a whole new lease of life – for instance, AMosaic, once barely usable because of its unreliability, is actually quite stable and pleasant to use with MUI 3. There are also plenty of programs which require at least version 3.3 of MUI, and some (such as IBrowse) need version 3.5.

So apart from increased speed and reliability, what does the latest incarnation of MUI have to offer? You will find pressing the right mouse button in your favourite MUI application now results in the appearance of a handy pop-up menu. You will also notice the whole registration section has been overhauled, although this appears purely cosmetic. Under the surface, plenty of changes have been made which will make MUI even easier for programmers to work with.

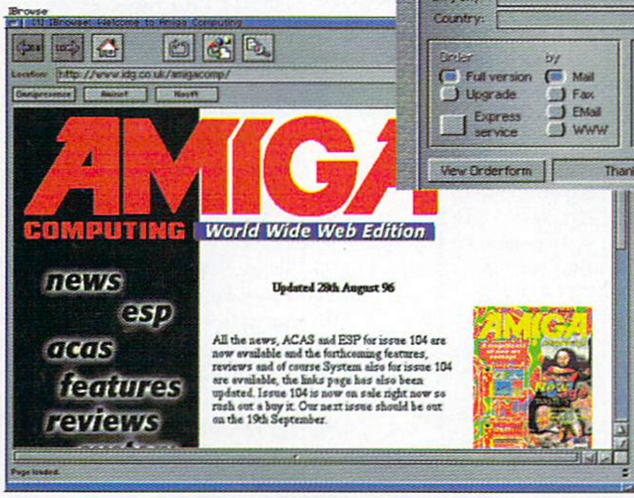
On the down side, on my system I have found MUI 3.6 significantly less stable than the excellent version 3.3. Crashes almost exclusively arise when closing or opening MUI screens, so if you experience similar problems it might be worth running several MUI applications together on the same screen. Still, these reliability problems will no doubt be addressed in future updates.

If you have not already registered your copy of MUI with the author, I would strongly recommend you do so now. In releasing programs as shareware the authors are showing faith in the Amiga owning public. It is the interests of the Amiga market as a whole (as well as your conscience) that you keep your part of the deal.

In years to come when people look back at these turbulent times, the emergence of MUI will doubtless be seen as a force which has helped galvanise the Amiga community in the face of fierce competition from first consoles and now PC contemptibles. Stefan Stuntz, take a bow. The Amiga world salutes you.



The MUI registration program: just do it



...and doesn't it just look gorgeous?

public sector

Come Together

I want to hear from you if you have any program, whatever its purpose, you consider worthy of review. Whether it be freely distributable Public Domain, Shareware or Licenceware, if you feel it is of sufficient quality to merit coverage, stick it in a jiffy bag or padded envelope and send it in with all haste. Although Public Sector cannot possibly hope to cover all submissions, I promise I'll at least look at your work - even if it is yet another Lottery program or Klondike cardset. It does make my job a lot easier though if disks are clearly labelled. Please also include a cover letter detailing the disk contents and price and giving some basic instructions. The magic address is:

Dave Cusick
PD submissions
Amiga Computing
Media House
Adlington Park
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

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Get your motor running!

Action's guide to the best racing games of all time

Inside: Worms Compo, Minskies, Uropa

AMIGA ACTION

News by **Andy Maddock & Hugh Poynton**

Next Month...

Next month in Amiga Action we talk to Paul Carrinton, Director of Vulcan Software about some exciting new projects currently in the Vulcan pipeline.

Burnout Beckons

Vulcan Software is set to release Burnout on December 1st. Burnout promises to set new standards for games on the Amiga, with specifications that make it sound more like a game for a pentium chip PC than an Amiga.

Set in a future where television entertainment is provided by gladiator style combat between opposing battle cars, Burnout allows the player to pit his car against 3 other human adversaries. The game is fully rendered with 256 colours and each of the cars obey Newtonian Mechanics (sounds complicated).

Because Vulcan have designed Burnout to be totally icon based, adding expansion files should be made much easier than in the past. Vulcan plan to release further car expansion disks, as well as an arena building disk. For further dewtails contact Vulcan on 01705 670269.

OTM back on It's feet

OTM Software is picking themselves up after one of their most important programmers left and set up in opposition. The first step on the road to recovery will be the launch of a new series of seven budget titles on January 15 to comprise the Mono Series. The games will sell at £10.95 each.

Other news from OTM is that Watchtower will be re-released. Starfighter, the five-disk, 3D, fully rendered space combat game should also be ready in the not to distant future.

For more details phone OTM on 01827 312 302.

Terminator Tomato

Mutation Software have release the second title in their Fun'n'Value series. They recently made the jump from operating as developers for publishers such as Core Design, to developing and publishing their own games.

Tommy Gun is a two player shoot 'em up in which Tommy Gun (a killer tomato) and his sidekick, Big Cheese attempt to rescue their grocery related friends from the hands of evil invaders. The game will be compatible with all PAL 1 Mb Amigas and will be available for £14.99 (inc. P&P).

For further details phone 01705 672616.

More from Mutation





Mt Tin Toy hasa variety of special skills to help him through the many difficult levels of poison bees and hidden spikes. The skill little tin toy bloke is sjowing here is his amazing 'bad wind' trick, designed to scare away potential attackers.

Also available from Mutation Software is Tin Toy Adventure, a quaintly retro scrolling platform game. The aim is to guide a small tin toy on a quest to break the dark spell cast over the House of Fun by an evil clown.

The game is pretty much a bog standard platformer with a fair amount of that old run along, jump over a poisonous tomato thing, catch some stars and then get blown to bits by a large killer bee type action. It doesn't sound that original, but it's quite well presented and includes 20 levels.

Mutation, rather unwisely, describe the game as possessing, '...full on, next generation, console style gameplay'. Not surprisingly, Tin Toy doesn't quite live up to this lavish claim, but at £14.99 it's inoffensive and inexpensive.

Championship Manager 96/97

After what seems like years, Championship Manager is at last nearly ready for release. The games developers, Eidos Interactive, believe it will be in the shops before Christmas.

Championship Manager is one of the most eagerly awaited Amiga releases, and not without reason. It promises to be one of the most comprehensive and detailed football management sims ever released. It will include 3,400 player statistics and histories, the actual 1996/97 season calendar and a new match report system. On top of this upto four players will be able to take part at once and a huge data base will store hundreds of stats, from shots on target, to tackles won.

For further information phone Eidos Interactive on 0121 606 1800.

Evil's Doom

Available over the Internet as a demo, and in its entirety via mail, is a new fantasy role playing game dreamt up by a group of Croatian software programmers.

Zagreb-based Olympia Software have chosen to market the game via e-mail because of lack of interest from major software publishers. However, the demo has proved popular and the full version is available for the equivalent of $35 in any EU currency.

For your money you get a huge game: 16 Megs of artwork, 30 locations, 5 huge dungeons, 45 characters and 200 items. Although, perhaps not surprisingly, the English isn't exactly perfect, for RPG fans, Evil's Doom is an absolute treat.

For further details mail Olympia Software at AB Magcvca 32, 1000 Zagreb, Croatia



Bamboola (?) and his pal sail off to the island of Splurk or something. Why do places always have such stupid names in RPG's. The Castle of Migidumf, I ask you.

Uropa2

Australian games developers Austex Software are currently working on a 3D adventure/shoot 'em up which looks like it could be well worth a look, if and when it becomes available.

Unlike many other games, Uropa2 involves two separate and distinct types of gameplay. The objective is to raid various underground enemy bases on the Europa moon, rescuing hostages and other assorted do-gooding – these sections are represented in isometric 3D.

However, before your troops can get to the underground bases they must travel there. This section is represented with Lightsourced vector 3D and involves flying over Europa in your Hovar vehicle blasting the bejeezus out of anybody or anything that gets in your way.

Uropa2 is scheduled for release sometime in the next few months, so keep your eyes peeled.

European League Manager

Manyk Software have recently launched a new football management game, entitled Euro League Manager. It includes the option to compete in English, Italian and French leagues, as well as in a fantasy European league. Manyk tell us that, to succeed in each league takes a different team building strategy.

The game also includes a number of features not seen in previous football management games, such as the option to send scouts to different countries to find new and promising players or the option to part exchange players in transfer deals.

Euro League Manager looks like it might be an interesting addition to the existing football management genre for the Amiga. Who knows, it might even steal some of the wind from Championship Managers sails.

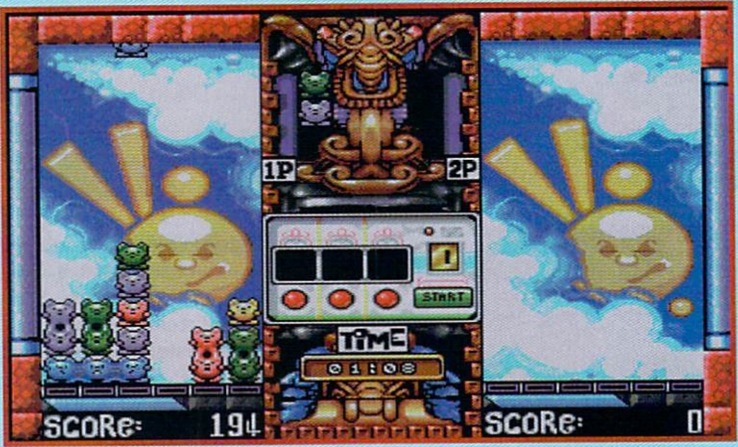
For further details phone Manyk on 0181 542 2687

A lovely styalised crayoned dude tackling another styalised crayoned dude. Jimmy Hill I ain't.



I later found out my team (Parma) were losing so badly because I using the novel tactic of not having any players on the field. Alex Ferguson I ain't.







Minskies Furballs

Hugh Poynton annoys the Feline Protection League and explodes cats for fun

There's a pub in Manchester called McNally's Sports Bar which my mates and I go to at the start of a night out on the town. Its brilliant; nice cheap beer, a pool table and hot nuts, unfortunately it also has an annoying arcade game called 'double bubble' or some other cheese.

The trouble with double-cheesy-bubble is that, despite the fact it has the simple, bouncy, colourful look of a Mothercare toy, it is in fact totally bloody addictive and pretty difficult. It's a nightmare, imagine it, your just kicking off your Saturday in Manchester and an arcade machine is the centre of attention.



Minskies Furballs is just this sort of colourful and simple game, the sort that turns normal people into antisocial joystick wagglers in pubs (if you get my meaning).

The idea behind Minskies Furballs is pretty simple. Different coloured cats drop in pairs from the top of the screen. It's your job to steer and rotate the mangy pair so that four or more cats of the same colour are positioned next to each other. Do this and they explode leaving the screen free for more cats. The greater the catocide the higher the score. Once the screen is packed out with multicoloured felines, the game is up. Minskies Furballs, it has to be said, is









stupidly addictive. It's one of those games that looks simple but is in fact pretty difficult. You continuously have that, 'Just one more go and I'll win' sort of feeling. One word of advice though, play against the computer or a mate because the gameplay is at least doubled.

Playing against an opponent means you have to hinder their efforts at emptying their screen whilst trying to clear your own screen of the little critters. The computer opponents are pretty tough cookies – watch out for Boocakes, the blue octopus and Harvey the slightly nouty looking bear thing.

There are a variety of ways to gain the upper hand. Whenever a connection of four or more cats is triggered either a fish or a concrete block is dropped into the opponents screen, mucking up their own connections. The only way to get rid of an obstruction is to build a connection around it - the obstruction will be blown up along with the cats. By building connections next to the blocks, weapons are revealed which you can use to clear cats or obstructions from your screen.



Minskies Furballs is, without doubt, great fun to play but there is one basic flaw in the game - it just isn't that original. The basic premise of the game is very Tetris-like and there isn't a great deal about the game that makes it stand out. Despite the fact that it's playable and very addictive, chances are you've played dozens of games like it.

It's well put together, well designed and fun. The idea behind it couldn't really be much simpler and the graphics look colourful and cute. Minskies is basically quite an engaging and addictive game and although it doesn't really have the originality or depth of some it's pretty likeable anyway. As games go, its a bimbo - simple, good fun, bright and gaudy. Worms it ain't, but you could do a lot worse than getting hold of a copy.

THE LOW-DOWN

PUBLISHER Binary Emotions
CONTACT 01722 416074
HD INSTALLABLE YES
PRICE TBA

GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	90%
DIFFICULTY	Tricky

All in all, Minskies Furballs is an fun and friendly little puzzle game. Although it wouldn't win any awards for originality, it does possess the essential ingredients of a good game: playability and addictiveness.

REVIEWED BY *HUGH*

OVERALL SCORE

85%

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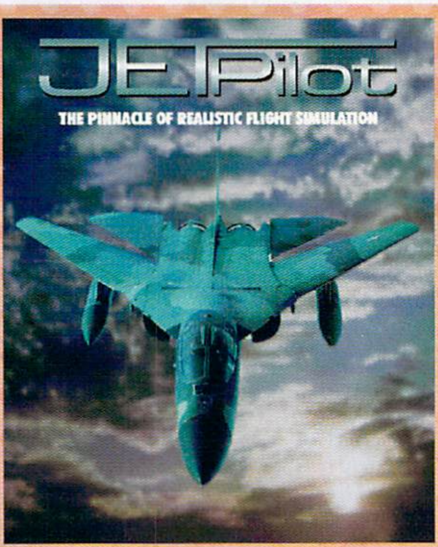
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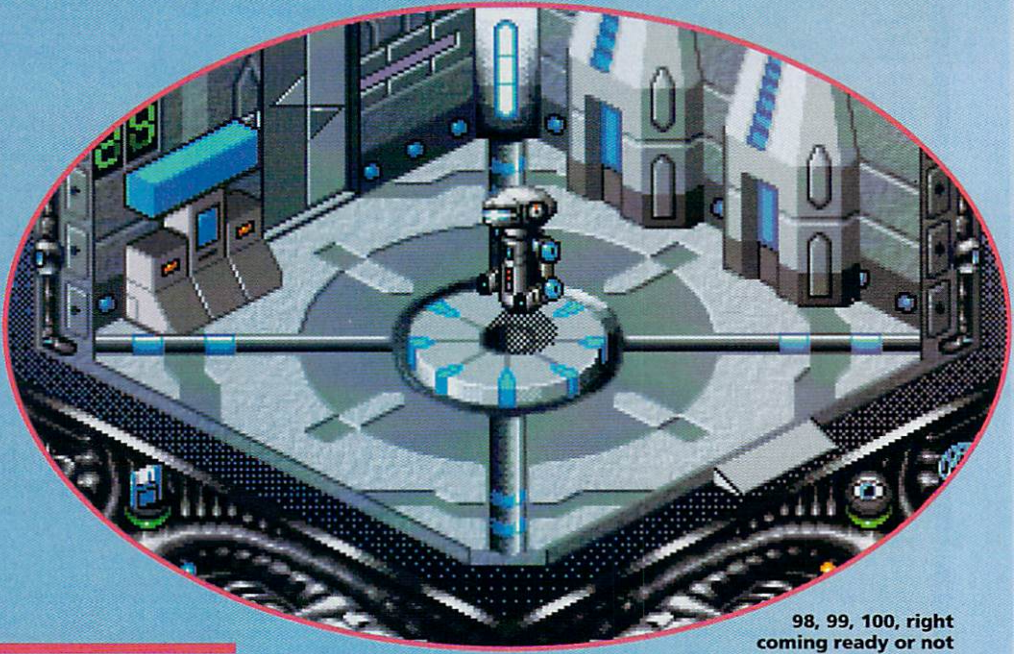
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He's always been told he's a space cadet, so Hugh Poynton was the obvious choice to review Austex Software's new shoot 'em up adventure



98, 99, 100, right coming ready or not

Uropa2



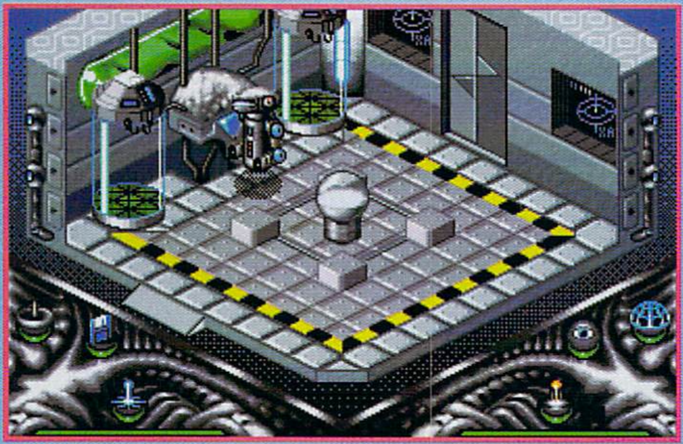
Mushrooms ahoy

I'm glad I'm not going to be around in the far future, it sounds like it's going to be a pretty grim place – global warming, meteorite collisions, computers taking over the planet and, of course, global thermo nuclear war. Things are never, well, nice. People don't seem to live in global harmony with all people and animals in the future.

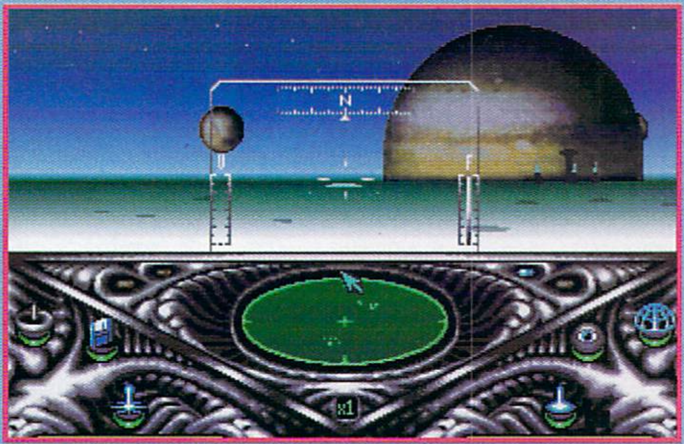
Well, Uropa2's future is also pretty grim. Basically, the Solar System is divided between the Intercorp Tekites (goodies) and the Kapones (baddies).

The Kapones are an evil rebel force who are in cahoots with some even more evil aliens who want to use the Kapones to help them take control of the entire universe. The Kapone's main communications base for summoning the evil slimy aliens is based on the moon of Uropa, which orbits Jupiter.

You play the part of a Tekite warrior robot and your mission involves Kapone's communications base before they can 'phone home' and get alien help. To make matters worse the Kapones are holding some colonists hostage, so your floating metal



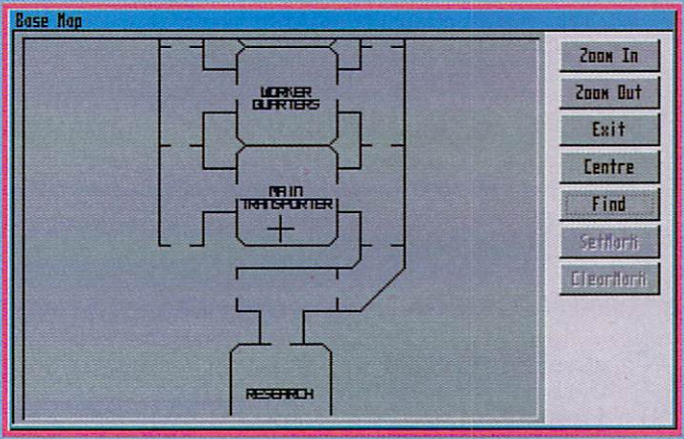
These glass tubes are for 'fluid exchange'



Take care to avoid the large planet on right



Just look at my stunning supply of weapons



The ever handy A-Z of Jupiter

mickey has to conduct a series of special ops to rescue the colonists and blow up the base.

Most of the action is set in the communications base. This portion of the game is viewed from an isometric 3D angle. The graphics here are quite chunky, but not bad. As in all adventure games, the aim is to wander about and explore the area, picking up clues, ammunition and equipment. Also essential are the wall terminals, which, if accessed give you all the important and essential information needed

Your Tekite warrior will need to get to the Kapone base in order to kick some alien butt. This is done on the unfortunately named Hovar (mmm, very scary, a really hard spaceship named after a lawn mower). It isn't exactly a tie fighter - it can only steer left and right and you can't alter your altitude.

Using this intergalactic Lada you navigate your way to whichever base station needs sorting out. Watch out for the Kapone fighters however, because they're about twice as big, and twice as mean as you are.



Intercorps microwave of tomorrow

Although in general a pretty good game, Uropa2 does have a couple of flaws. Firstly, I actually found the Tekite droid rather difficult to control until I got accustomed to it, but that's probably more to do with the fact that I haven't played many isometric games and just had a little difficulty orientating myself.

After a few plays I was fine but on the first few attempts, my little tin can was wandering around like I'd just drank 10 pints of extra strength Droid Brew.

Another small whinge is the fact that if you actually manage to rescue some colonists and get them to follow you they will run around like headless chickens and block your path so you don't actually get anywhere. The only solution to this quandary is to zap a few of them with the droid's laser sword Bar the giblets on the floor, unlimited mobility is all yours but it does seem to defeat the object of the game to a degree.

Uropa2 attempts something quite refreshing. It is part shoot 'em up, part adventure game which means it strikes a balance between mindless blasting, and actually using your head to solve puzzles.

Graphics wise the game is OK. Not stunning but acceptable. If I have a major criticism it would be the fact that the surface levels just aren't developed quite as well as they could be. The idea is brilliant, but unfortunately, it just doesn't live up to the promise. The Hovar gets wasted far too quickly, and the action is so fast that it is next to impossible to blast the enemy ships.

Although it does have its flaws and can look a little rough around the edges, Uropa2 is still not a bad game. It is very challenging and there is enough depth to ensure that you will keep coming back for more, which, when all is said and done is the hallmark of a good game.

THE LOW-DOWN

PUBLISHER Austex Software
CONTACT http://ph42276.jcu.edu.au
HD INSTALLABLE Yes
PRICE TBA

GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	85%
DIFFICULTY	Tricky

Austex released a shareware version on November 23 which is available from their website, but you might as well try getting hold of a full version because it is definitely worth it.

REVIEWED BY HUGH

OVERALL SCORE

85%



Burn

Hugh Poynton offers a selection of his favourite driving games

Call me contentious but I think the best games genre on every format of computer or games machine is the driving sim. I've got a theory that backs this sweeping statement. When you stop off at a motorway service station, which games are people always hammering away at in those dark dingy alcove bits between the toilets and the services shop? Yup, the humble driving game. I know I'm not the first to say it but why don't they just carry on driving and throw 50p out of the window every few miles?

I think I know why they are so popular. Its due to the fact that almost everybody of my age group was indelibly affected by a television programme called the Dukes of Hazzard. The one in which two slightly dim, good ol' boys were chased all around the deep south by a selection of the most mentally and physically challenged policemen in the world.

These coppers were also further hampered by the fact they were called slightly dodgy names like Cleetis and Eeenis and the cars they drove, no matter how fast they drove them, just could not do all the smart jumps that the Duke brothers' tango coloured charger could.

This, combined with films like The Cannonball Run, meant it was inevitable that, once this generation grew up and started earning, they would be driving about in XR2s and GTIs. The fascination doesn't stop there: one of my mates burns around town in a Honda CRX but still hammers away at The Need For Speed in his spare time.

Most of the really flash games are on the Playstation, however, there are still enough Amiga games to ensure you can enjoy motor way madness, road rage and auto carnage from the comfort of your armchair. Here is a selection of the best:

Super Skidmarks

Skidmarks was released back in 1995, and, to put it simply, everyone loved it. Little old ladies, bitter unemployed ex-dockers, affluent brain surgeons; they all thought it was tops.

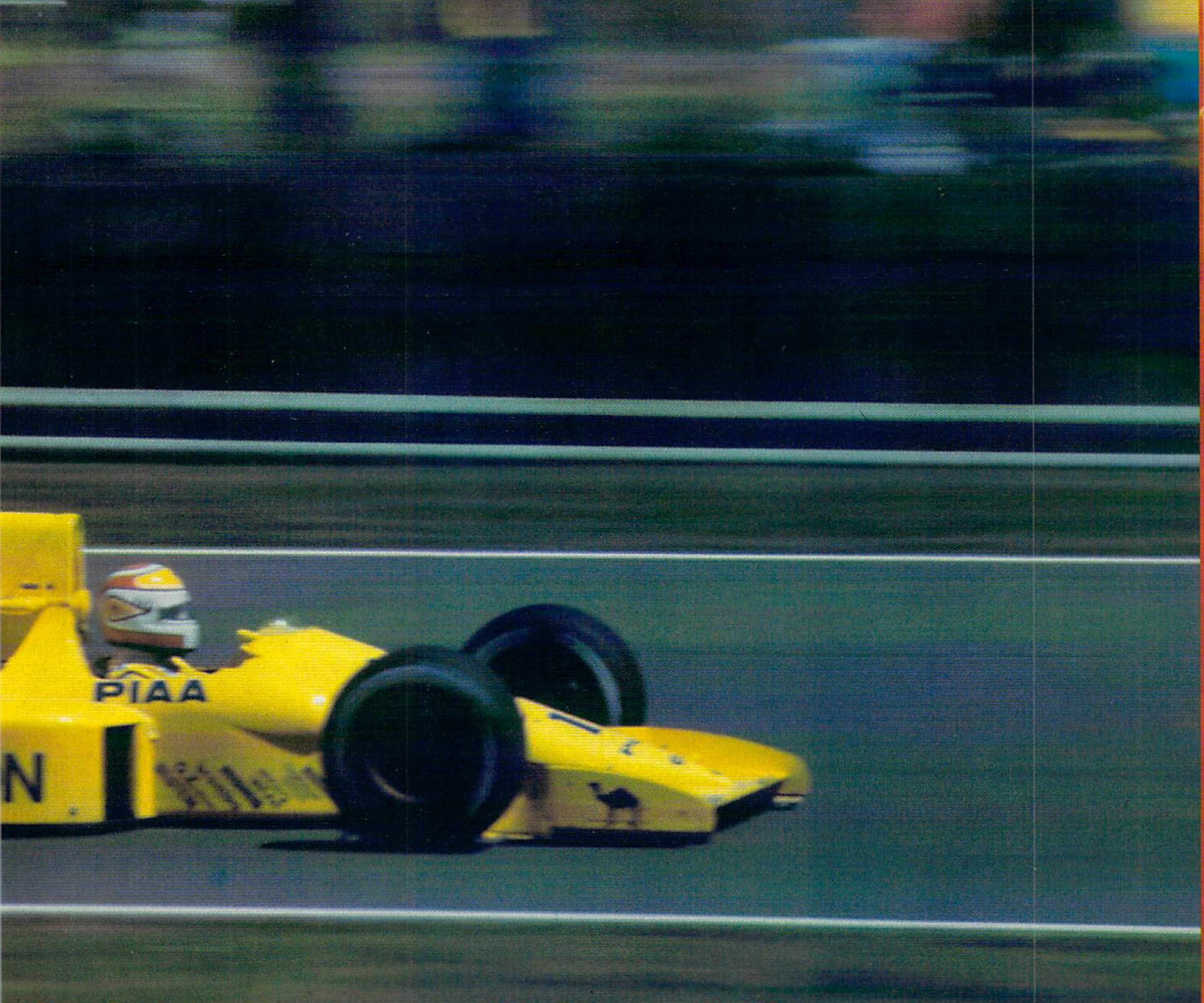
The concept was simplicity itself; race a variety of funky little motors around tricky dirt tracks and beat all the other cars. What really set the game apart from its competitors was the fact that, as well as having flawless yet simple graphics, it had acres of playability.

The presentation looked very arcade like. Instead of viewing the action from the driver's position, you had an isometric overheadish to the side a bit vantage point. The tracks were more difficult and dangerous than driving the wrong way round the M25 and you could pick the coolest of cool cars.

I'm convinced that's where Screamer and other Playstation racing games are sadly lacking – you just don't have the opportunity to drive a Mini. Not just Minis mind – 4x4s, Porsches, Beetles, as well as loads more.

Sadly, despite its excellent gameplay and addictiveness, Skidmarks had a few irritating minor flaws. As a result, Acid Software released the Super Skidmarks Data Disks.

Super Skidmarks addressed all the flaws of the original and added a huge selection of optional features. There were 12 new tracks



Rubber

included, you could change the colour of your car, you could tow a caravan, and what's more, you could play Pong while the game was loading up. What more could a sane human being want?

Xtreme Racing

Along similar, not entirely serious lines is my next choice. Xtreme Racing by Silltunna Software is a brilliant, shiny, fun example of a racing game. You could describe it as Super Mario Karts for the Amiga. Like Karts, Racing is, graphics wise, an absolute peach. The 256 colour, texture mapped graphics really demonstrate the capabilities of the Amiga to the best.

However, a number of features make Xtreme Racing really stand apart from the opposition. Firstly, and most importantly, eight people can play – four on a single machine and two machines can be linked. Another bonus is the fact that on each of the tracks are a number of men, lemmings, sheep and sharks which serve absolutely no purpose other than to be ran over. Useless but, oh so much fun.

Among the variety of weapons and pick ups you can collect are homing sheep, and if you upgrade the game using the XTR Data Disk, you'll have the unique opportunity to drag race a sheep.

With the aid of the XTR Data Disk you can also make your own tracks using a track editor. Tracks are another of the great strong points of Xtreme Racing. Quite simply put, the person who designed the tracks must have been off his head. You can race on a gaudy pink 'Love Track', complete with love hearts and pink tarmac, or a knobbly but colourful lego track. It's little touches like this that make the game both extremely playable and a good laugh as well.

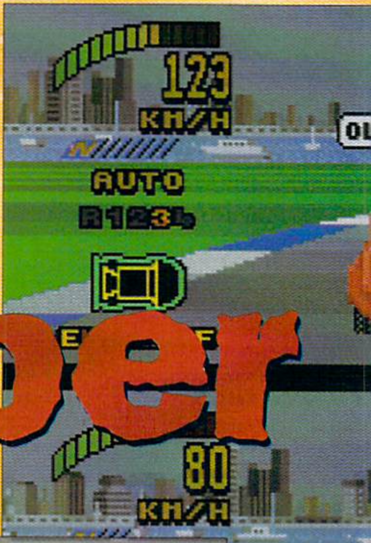
F1GP

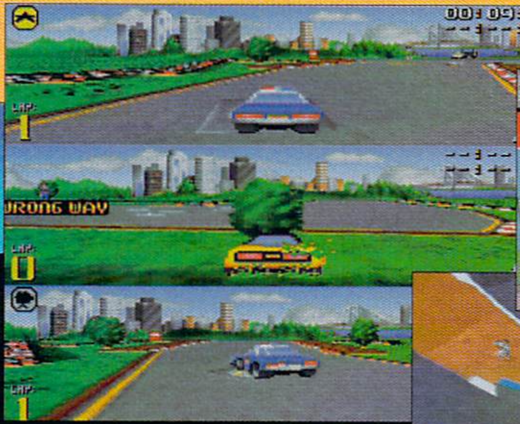
Despite lacking love tracks, sharks and sheep, Formula One Grand Prix is still one of the best racing games ever produced for the Amiga. It is a 3D simulation of Formula One racing using the tracks and teams of the 1991 season.

Despite its age the game is still pretty impressive and includes a wide range of features that really make for maximum playability. It allows you to experience almost every aspect of Formula One racing (apart from Murray Walker's insane but still utterly cool ranting – you'll have to get a

ACTION FEATURE RACING

Burn Rubber

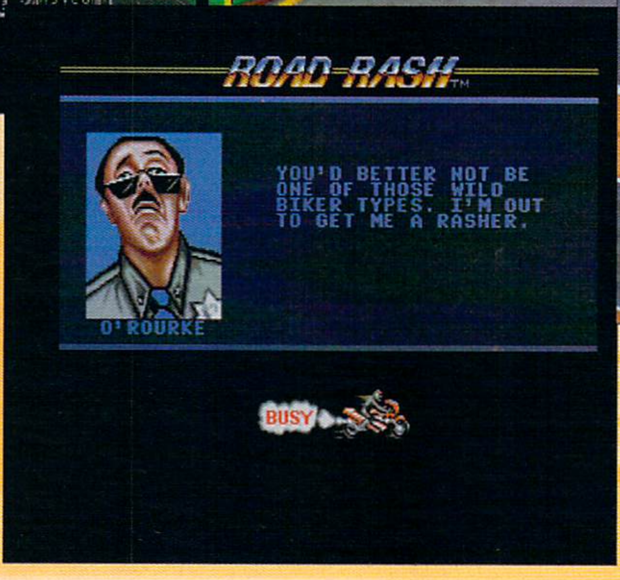












Playstation for that).

You must set up your car to optimise its performance, qualify and then race on any one of 16 championship circuits. You have the option to choose the length of the race – if you really want a huge crick in your neck and a thumping headache, you can race all 70 laps of a Grand Prix.

Helpful additions are the race aids. The first, auto braking, is frankly for girlie la-las, but it does ensure that you achieve some pretty fast lap times because all you have to do is steer and keep the pedal to the metal.

Other aids include the auto gears, self correcting spin, indestructible mode and the ideal line option. Using this aid, you are able to see a white dotted line on the track that displays the best line to take for various corners and chicanes – for this, Microprose actually enlisted the help of the Footwork team.

Although getting hold of F1GP nowadays is something of a chore, tracking down a copy would be well worth the effort because it is so interesting and playable, a game that might even give a playstation racer a run for its money.

Road Rash

This is something a bit different. Have you ever known somebody who's into bikes? If you drive a car, it may be nice, big, shiny and fast but it is still, just a car, something to get you from A to Z. This is not the case with bikes. I've known a couple of people who ride them and they are fanatical about the things. They will know the difference between a ZXR 2000 (or something) and a ZXR 2001 – each bike will be painfully, obviously different to them, when to normal people they're just noisy things with two wheels that go fast.

Road Rash is about as close as I've come to doing 170mph on a Fireblade, and at the risk of sounding like a wuss I'm happy leaving it that way so I don't get smeared down the M6.

Road Rash is probably my favourite game because it possesses all the essential ingredients of playability, features, graphics and, most importantly, originality.

Although, like Lotus, Road Rash is a veteran, it is still a gem. The aim is, as always, to burn off the opposition and generally go as fast as possible, but with the added fun of being able to beat the stuffing out of them in the process.

There are a number of little touches that really make this game fun. Like Need for Speed on the Playstation, you actually race on public roads as opposed to race tracks which means, in addition to racing your opponents you also have avoid oncoming cars. This can make a race much hairier, but













much greater fun.

Road Rash's manual is another of the games little bonus. For some reason the text reads like a Bill and Ted script (bummer dude). But it is about American bikers, maybe that's what American bikers talk like.

The game has proved to be such a good laugh that Electronic Arts have launched their own Road Rash multiplayer game for Windows 95 using the VirtualRally player matching service.

Top Gear 2

A couple of years ago Gremlin brought out a little game called Top Gear 2. Although pretty much outdated by many of the games available on other formats now, it claimed to be the fastest game available for the Amiga back in 1994.

A number of touches made Top Gear 2 a good laugh. First of all, as you won more and more prize money you were able to soup up your car using a total of 36 different bits of kit, from engine upgrades and nitros to suspension and the like.

However, you started off with a basic car which meant winning enough money for an upgrade was a fair task. As you became more and more proficient, you were given the option of racing much trickier tracks – a total of 64 cities in 16 different countries.

Top Gear 2 was also a two player game meaning that you had the valuable opportunity of holding grudge drag races with your friends.

In my opinion, the best thing about the game was the fact that you could paint your car any gaudy colour you desired and, get this...in a race, as you passed the opposition, a little speech bubble would emerge from the driver's position and pass comment on the other drivers, or your own driving for that matter.

Of course these little speech bubbles were entirely unrealistic. Did they say 'Who taught you to drive, **sehole', did they hell. These polite little drivers would say things like 'Yo, stay in line dude', or 'Crash and burn', like they were some weird combination of Bill and Ted and Maverick and Goose.

The down side to playing this game is that, when actually driving for real you might just find yourself coming out with such moronic phrases as 'Hey dude, get out of my way' or perhaps more worryingly 'Eat my rubber'.



COMPETITION

Calling all wrigglers

1) In which drink might you find a worm?

- [ ] Kiora
- [ ] Coffee
- [ ] Tequila

2) In which sport are worms an essential piece of equipment?

- [ ] Track and field athletics
- [ ] Hang gliding
- [ ] Fishing

3) What was Worms' original working title?

- [ ] Fish
- [ ] F117A Stealth Fighter
- [ ] Total Wormage

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)

Address

Postcode

Daytime Tel

Now send your entry to Worms Competition, Amiga Computing, IDG Media, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 4NP

- [ ] Tick here if you do not want to recieve promotional material from other companies

To celebrate the release of Worms; The Director's Cut, we've decided to launch the Amazing Worm Competition. In conjunction with Team 17, our amazing give-away contest gives you the chance to win oodles and oodles of Team 17 goodies

Thanks to the good folk up at Wakefield, up for grabs we have:

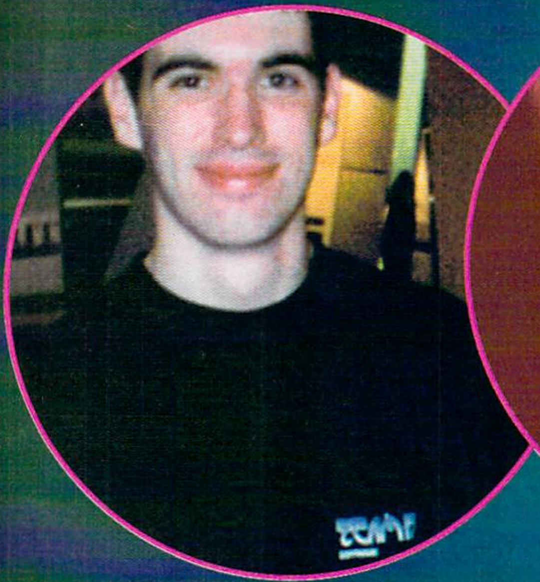
- Five copies of Worms; The Director's Cut
- Five of the original Worms
- Five of the Killing Grounds
- Five exclusive Worms T-shirts

and if you're very lucky...

- The star prize of a signed print of Worms artwork.

Mind you, we don't just give things away here at Amiga Computing, oh no, you've got to earn them. Answer the three MENSA standard questions in the entry form, fill in your details and send the answers to us along with whatever you think is an acceptable bribe, to arrive no later than February 14.

C'mon you



The man himself - Amdy Davidson



And one of his cooler creations



Worms battle it out anywhere...

Hugh Poynton discusses the Worm saga and the future of the Amiga market with Team 17 wunderkinder, Andy Davidson

The story of Andy Davidson and Worms is a success story of the sort you only ever seem to see in TV mini series or paperback novels. The jump from bored schoolboy to one of the top games programmers in the country happened almost instantaneously.

Bored witless during his A levels, Andy started to program a game in which teams of little worms did battle with each other. Working at an Amiga shop at the time, Andy took the opportunity to test the game out on the public. Doing this enabled him to get a large amount of feedback so that he could hone the game as much as possible.

Provisionally entitled Total Wormage, Worms was proving to be very popular. Andy decided to try his luck at the 1994 Amiga Trade Show and, within five minutes of presenting his two skanky looking diskettes to the Team 17 stand, they offered to sponsor and market the project.

Andy and Team 17 haven't looked back since. Worms has been one of the highest selling games on all formats for the last year, and has won a bundle of awards including Game of the Year in Spain and France, The Most Original New Title Award, and the Live and Kicking Viewers Award.

So why has Worms been so phenomenally successful?. Andy believes its real beauty is the fact that it appeals on many different levels. It can be approached as a strategy game or just pure fun. This became apparent while testing in the Amiga shop – little kids would play for a laugh while their dads tried to be the Robert E Lee of the worm world.

The development and approach of Andy and company at Team 17 is such that the game has managed to avoid some of the cynical marketing ploys of which other software developers are guilty.

Many games are designed so that they have what you could almost describe as an inbuilt 'use by' date. After completing the levels the game is exhausted and the punter loses interest and goes and buys something new. With a billion levels (via the unique 'graffiti mode') Worms will always have new possibilities because every different type of battlefield defines how the game is to be played.

Another of the secrets for Worms' success is the fact that, as Andy believes, the market is such that 3D games seem to be

wrigglers



in a junkyard...



or on top af a teddy bear!



One of Andy's more dangerous creations

over exploited and perhaps over rated, whereas multi-player games seem to be definitely under exploited.

Although most 3D games look good, it is easy to 'dress mutton up as lamb' and disguise a tired and unoriginal idea up as the future of gaming in the Western world.

Multi-player games on the other hand, although perhaps not looking as impressive, are certainly a hell of a lot more playable. With Worms, the average punter can multi-play on a normal computer. An office full of accountants may be able to play Quake on networked Pentiums, but not that many other people have this opportunity.

The key to Team 17's future strategy is that, instead of doing cash ins and spin offs, Worms will continue to be developed. Patches and add-ons will ensure it survives for quite a while.

However, sadly it seems as though software houses such as Team 17 cannot guarantee they will be able to continue developing software for the Amiga. Andy believes that, at the present moment, the Amiga is being killed by inertia and the overwhelming dominance of the PC.

Software houses face the predicament that, to develop entirely new products on the Amiga is extremely risky, yet not developing Amiga software will only hasten the demise of the machine.

A project might take 10 months to a year and burn up lots of cash – if distributors won't stock it however, what's the point?. Add to this the fact that it is next to impossible to port Amiga programs over to a PC or vice versa and the situation doesn't look good.

The Amiga really does need a radical overhaul and design to compete with PCs which are becoming more and more powerful and much less expensive. How likely the Amiga is to receive this overhaul is debatable.

However, even without this radical overhaul, Andy believes that the Amiga will be about for some time yet due to the fact that it retains a large and loyal fan-base. There are many people about who have, like Andy, grown up with the Amiga who don't want to have to learn to program PCs to write games.

Even if distribution of Amiga products is limited to shareware and specialist Amiga stores such as Direct Software in Northampton, people will continue to purchase Amiga products for many more years.

One of the machine's strengths – and probably one of the key reasons it is, and will be, with us for some time – is the fact that, unlike the PC, young programmers on a budget can write for the format.

The reason why programmers such as Andy Davidson have brought us original, fresh games is because, quite simply, they have been able to. Without the Amiga, any young talented programmer on a budget would have to write on a PC, the machine itself being very expensive, and the software required again, too costly.

Unfortunately Team 17 can't commit themselves to any new Amiga games development. However, Andy believes that he will continue to write for the machine for the same reason he wrote the original Total Wormage – he enjoys it.

Photogenics

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To get the best out of your free Photogenics 1.2a cover disk, you'll want the 130pp manual giving you tutorials and full references to the program. You get the manual plus a free disk of plug ins and files to use with Photogenics 1.2a



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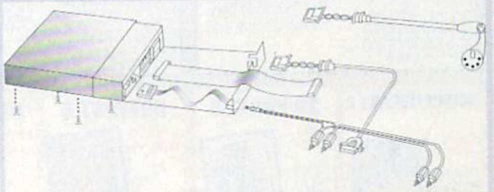
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x128 Emulator - James McKay
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C64 Sally - Brand new emulation program for the PC so new, not trid it yet.
PC64E - This is a new windows based emulator, Only a beta.
Win64b - This is the latest commodore 64 software emulator which works in windows. Version 3.11 or Windows 95.

Atari STeM Package v0.99

(This software has NO commercial copyright)
* Eighth source code only a TOS 1.02 image file is necessary. (You must create TOS.IMG).
* bug removed: BIOS bconin(2) always returned 39/13 but still disables <Alt>.
* Windows Support
* Full numpad support, "pipe" key added
* RTC uses in-built time
* Some code is still absolute but optimized

The Amstrad Range

CPCEMU emulates a Amstrad CPC 464, 664 or 6128 with many extensions. To say it with other words, the program imitates the behaviour of the older Amstrad computers on your new PC.
- nostalgia (oh, how nice was my good old CPC ...)
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- better environment to develop programs
- playing games
- work (yes, a CPC is enough for simple text processing)

The Apple Range

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Coleco Vision

ColEm for Win32 v0.1.2 and the dos versions have been encluded. ColEm is a non-profit emulator created for those individuals who were and still are fans of the Coleco gaming era and who wish to play thier Coleco Vision games on todays operating systems.

The Dragon 32

PC-DRAGON EMULATOR V1.02 by PAUL BURGIN
A Dragon or Tandy Color Computer II emulator for IBM PC's and compatibles. This program allows you to use your Dragon or Tandy CoCo games and applications software without the need to clutter up your desk with more than one computer.

The TSR 80

TRS-80 MODEL I EMULATOR
This emulator package allows your MS-DOS based PC to run as a TRS-80 Model I. It will be able to run virtually all Model I applications and software from Galaxy Invasion to Electric Pencil and the Z-80 Editor/Assembler.

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Seriously Shell Shocked

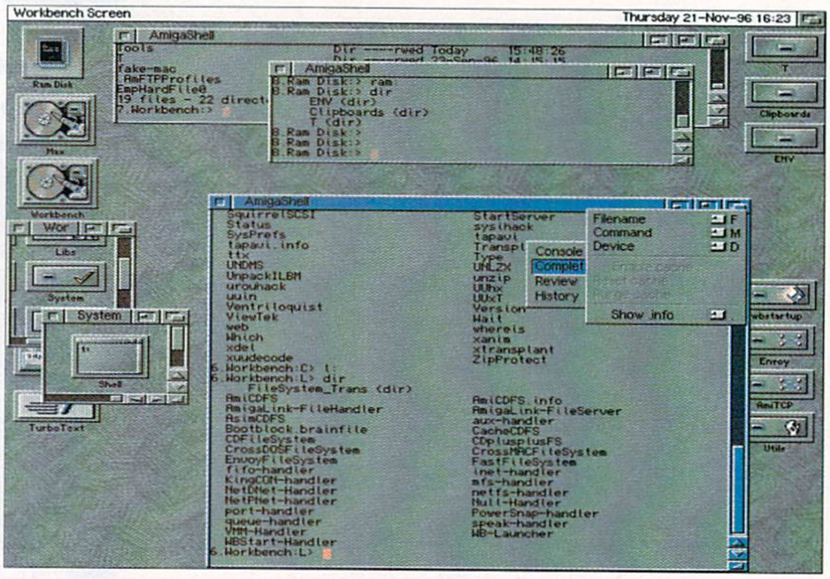
If there is one part of the Amiga's operating system that can be overlooked by the beginner it has to be the Shell. Originally, back with Workbench 1.3 and before, you had virtually no choice but to regularly resort to using this basic part of the AmigaDOS, as it gave you the control and flexibility over programs and files that the early Workbench simply could not.

A new Amiga user who has only ever used Workbench 3 or even 2 could be well excused for never having touched the Shell in their entire life, as these latest releases provide far more power in the Workbench than 1.3 ever could. Even so, I am pretty sure that every long term Amiga user still has a keyboard short cut close at hand that fires up an AmigaDOS Shell.

This is mainly because even now-a-days, using the Shell you can perform certain tasks faster and also many programs only provide certain functions through the Amiga's Shell. So a basic knowledge about the Shell is still needed.

You can find the Shell icon in the System drawer. Once you have double clicked on it, a fairly unimportant looking interface window will appear with the words, New Shell Process and a **1.>** prompt waiting for you to type in commands. This is called the Command Line Interface or CLI for short and is where you type in AmigaDOS commands.

Essentially there are two things you can type into a Shell window, directory names and command names. So if you type **C:** and hit return, then type **DIR** and again press return, you will get a directory listing of the C directory. This is because when you typed in C: this changed the current directory of the Shell to the C directory. So when you ran the DIR command it listed



everything that was in the current directory Shell, which just happened to be the C directory.

This is important to remember, normally when you run a command it will only act on the current directory, unless you specifically give it an alternative file or directory. So if you now type DIR L:, even though the current directory is still the C drawer, DIR will list the L directory, as this is what it told the DIR command to do.

Along the same lines, if you wanted MultiView or FastView to display a file, unless it is in the current directory you will have to specify the exact file path and name otherwise the programs will not be able to find the file. If you wanted to display the startup-sequence you would have to type multiview s:startup-sequence into the shell. Otherwise you would need to change the current directory to S: and then tell Multiview to load the startup-sequence.

As I said earlier many programs only provide certain functions through the Shell. The normal way to find out what extras commands have is to type the command name and add a question mark, with a space in between the two. The command will then respond with a list of options or switches that it can take. Unfortunately there is never any explanation as to how you can use them and usually only experience lets you guess how to use them.

If you try this with MultiView by typing **MultiView ?** you will get a list of commands you can add. You should also notice each is ended with a slash and a single letter. This letter tells you what sort of input that command needs.

```
/S - Boolean switch, is on or off no input needed
/K - Takes a text input, such as a screen name
/N - Requires a numerical input, such as a
screnn depth
```

One final note about how to get a little extra out of the Amiga's Shell. This comes in the form of a replacement program called KingCON. Available on Aminet and also from our Beginners Tools cover disks on the January 96 issue (back issues available) KingCON replaces the normal console device for a much more powerful one, featuring a scrollable review window, filename completion and other very useful functions and is well worth tracking down.

SHELL STUFF

As usual there are a number of little hidden extras about the Shell that you can change to your advantage. Firstly, when using the Shell icon to launch a new AmigaDOS Shell, if you pop up its information requester (click on the Shell icon once and press right-Amiga i) you will see it has a few tool types associated with it. The stack tool type can largely be ignored as you will rarely have to increase this.

The window tool type helps you control how the Shell window should appear.

```
WINDOW=CON:0/100/600/180/Shell../CLOSE
```

The first part CON: tells the Amiga what device should be used to display the Shell output. This will always be the CON short for console. When Workbench 1.3 first appeared, a replacement came out called NEWCON but this has been 'absorbed' into the operating system and is now just called CON.

All the next four numbers do is say at what x,y co-ordinates the window should appear and how wide and high it should be. By leaving the width blank the Shell will open up the width of the screen.

Finally the FROM tool type lets you make the Shell run a normal AmigaDOS script before appearing on screen. As standard this defaults to the Shell-Startup found in the S directory, and even if the tool type is not defined or you start a Shell from the CLI this script will still be run.

Paul Overaa explains how the gadtools library helps simplify menu creation

assembler

Gadtools to the rescue

Shortly after the November issue of AC hit the streets I received a couple of emails, firstly thanking me for providing an example of Intuition-based resident code, and then pointing out that there are plenty of programmers (themselves included) who would have preferred rather more details about the less esoteric elements of the example – such as how the gadtool menus were set up and so on.

The reason of course, that I didn't go too deeply into this area at the time was simply a matter of space but, since there may well be other readers who find menu creation and installation confusing, I thought the least I could do is set the record straight by spending a couple of issues dealing with this topic.

Gadtool menu definitions are, in fact, based on sets of data blocks built using the NewMenu structure shown in listing 1. Now while this structure unit may seem a bit frightening on first encounter hopefully, when you see the equivalent data statements, the arrangements will not seem so bad. Let's start then at the top of this NewMenu entity and work down through the important, ie most useful, items.

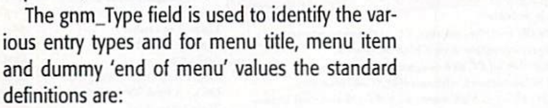
The gnm_Type field is used to identify the various entry types and for menu title, menu item and dummy 'end of menu' values the standard definitions are:

```
NM_TITLEEQU     1
NM_ITEM EQU     2
NM_END  EQU     0
```

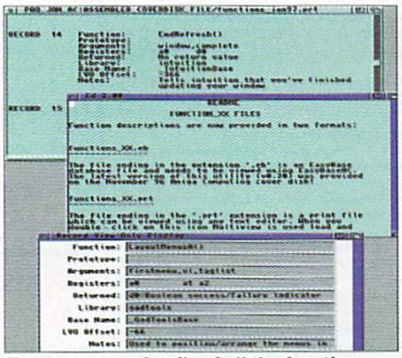
The only other fields you need to worry about initially are the gnm_Label and gnm_CommKey fields. These are pointers to text strings giving a name and a keyboard shortcut for the menu item. If, for instance, you want to associate the left-Amiga-L shortcut with a particular menu entry you include a commkey definition like this:

```
commkey0dc.b 'L',NULL
```

As always the best way to appreciate the overall ideas is to take an example so let's suppose we want to create a menu called PROJECT with three entries: Load File..., Sort File... and Quit. To produce the menu definition we set up equivalent NewMenu structures and the easiest way of doing this is with data statements as shown in listing 2.



Gadtool menu definitions are easy enough – but getting them up and running is often not quite so straightforward



To save space details of all the functions discussed (and more) are on the coverdisk!

Notice incidentally that, as far as text items are concerned, fields in the NewMenu structure are always pointers to strings – not the strings themselves. That's why I've placed corresponding labels in the NewMenu structures and defined the strings separately using dc.b statements such as:

```
menu_title        dc.b 'PROJECT',NULL
```

Menu attachment

While menu definition itself is easy enough I'm afraid (as you'll have seen from the November coverdisk code) that there is a certain amount of work involved in getting such a menu operational. This month I'll deal in general with the various tasks that need to be carried out and in the next instalment I'll tackle the coding specifics.

Firstly, gadtools needs the characteristics of the screen on which the menu is going to appear and this is achieved by making a call to the gadtool GetVisualInfoA() function. Secondly a CreateMenusA() routine must be executed – this carries out all the underlying Intuition-related menu structure setting up that previously had to be coded manually by Amiga programmers.

Thirdly, since the menu structures created by the above mentioned routines still contain no size or position information this now has to be provided in a separate step involving a call to a LayoutMenusA() library function. Only when all this has been done can the menu finally be linked to a window using the Intuition SetMenuStrip() function.

All the functions except LayoutMenusA(), incidentally, have corresponding free up routines that need to be called before a program terminates and you may well be thinking that this gadtools approach still seems a little like hard work. Perhaps it is but trust me – it's an awful lot quicker than using the original underlying Intuition arrangements. At the end of the day we have, after all, really only got a few library function calls to perform!

Wot NO Code?

Nope, that comes with next month's instalment. I have however, placed an EasyBaseAC file on disk (functions_feb97.eb) that contains both the functions I've discussed and the equivalent menu deallocation routines. In a runnable program of course, we need not only to be able to create and use menus, but to dismantle them when they are no longer needed. You'll also find a few other functions included that are going to come into the picture as our menu-related discussions proceed!

```
STRUCTURE NewMenu,0
                    UBYTE     gnm_Type
                    UBYTE     gnm_Pad
                    APTR      gnm_Label
                    APTR      gnm_CommKey
                    UWORD     gnm_Flags
                    LONG
gnm_MutualExclude
                    APTR      gnm_UserData
                    LABEL     gnm_SIZEOF
```

Listing 1: The Gadtool NewMenu structure

```
menu        dc.b      NM_TITLE,0
            dc.l      menu_title,NULL
            dc.w      0
            dc.l      0,NULL

            dc.b      NM_ITEM,0
            dc.l      item0,commkey0
            dc.w      0
            dc.l      0,NULL

            dc.b      NM_ITEM,0
            dc.l      item1,commkey1
            dc.w      0
            dc.l      0,NULL

            dc.b      NM_ITEM,0
            dc.l      item2,commkey2
            dc.w      0
            dc.l      0,NULL

            dc.b      NM_END,0
            dc.l      NULL,NULL
            dc.w      0
            dc.l      0,NULL

menu_title dc.b       'PROJECT',NULL

item0       dc.b      'Load File...',NULL
commkey0    dc.b      'L',NULL

item1       dc.b      'Sort File...',NULL
commkey1    dc.b      'S',NULL

item2       dc.b      'Quit!',NULL
commkey2    dc.b      'Q',NULL
```

Listing 2: A 680x0 gadtool menu definition

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Phil South presents some Error Trapping AMOS routines

The Big E

Error handling is something I don't think we've ever covered before in this column, and I thought it was high time that we did something about that. You know that your programs should be error free. But what do you do when the user of your program does something unpredictable and you might get a crash?

How do you make the program stay on and report an error to the user when they do something silly? And how do you build in error trapping commands to debug your own programs when you are coding? Well we do this with error trapping and most especially the ON ERROR command.

Ouch divide by zero

The most classic computer error of all time, and one which finds itself to the finished version of so many programs I can't begin to catalogue them. Try this:

```
Do
        Input "Type in two numbers";A,B
        Print A;" divided by ";B;" is ";A/B
Loop
```

Now this works just fine provided you don't try to divide by zero. The way you would use a trap to find this and weed it out of your program is like so:

```
On Error Goto _HELPME
_ROUTINE:
Do
        Input "Type in two numbers";A,B
        Print A;" divided by ";B;" is ";A/B
Loop
_HELPME:
Print "Sorry, but you tried to divide by
zero. Are you nuts? Try again, bozo..."
Resume _ROUTINE
```

This time if you try to divide by zero, you get a rather rude error message. The point is here that in a program where you rely on users to input system legal values at input commands they can be unpredictable and silly. (Sad but true. I mean we are all users too, right?)

This way, by building an error message into your program you avoid crashes and users get the feeling that you really know what your talking about. Your program has a solid well bug tested feel and users get to use it without any (as they see it) irrational bugs which prevent the program from running.

What's Up, Proc?

You can go one stage further, using ON ERROR PROC, and have an entire program which handles any errors which come through the system. So in its simplest form we have a similar process as before, but this time using a PROC rather than a simple GOTO/RESUME:

```
On Error Proc _HELPME
_ROUTINE:
Do
        Input "Type in two numbers";A,B
        Print A;" divided by ";B;" is ";A/B
Loop
Procedure _HELPME
Print "Sorry, but you tried to divide by
zero. Are you nuts? Try again, bozo..."
Resume Next
End Proc
```

The resume next command takes you back to the input, and in the process you can even tell the user the Error Number of the error which took place, using the Errn variable:

```
X=Errn
Print "Error Number : ";X
```

and so on.

For testing errors you can automatically generate them too, with the ERROR command. Simple type:

```
Error 88
```

or some such, from the table inside the back of your AMOS manual, and you will generate an error of that type to see if you error handling routines can trap it.

Trapper Required

A far more advanced technique is to use the TRAP and ERRTRAP commands to make your own error messages for specific commands. You use the TRAP command to look for an error with an instruction, like so:

```
Trap Load Iff "picture.iff",0
If Errtrap : Print "Loading Error for this
picture" : End If
```

and if the picture doesn't load you get a specific message within your program rather than a crash and an a system message saying the picture isn't there. The ERRTRAP function shows the status of the error trapped by the TRAP command, and if no error is detected it returns a zero. If there is an error, you get the error number, so you can say:

```
X=Errtrap
Print "Error Number =";X
```

like you did before.

Finally you can use the AMOS system error messages in your own programs by passing the error number to the ERR$ function. So if you have an error 35, you could say:

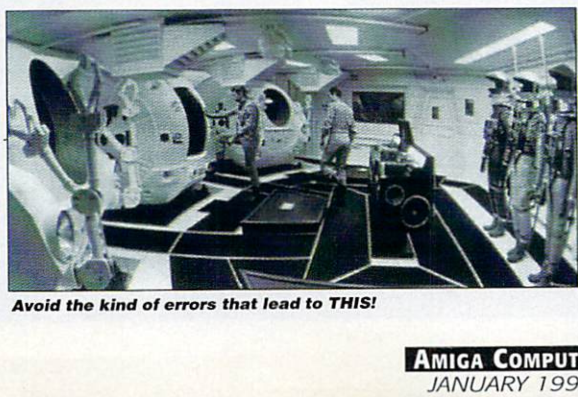
```
X$=Err$(35)
```

or indeed:

```
X$=Err$(X)
```

and you would get the error message, in this case error 35 which is *Bank Already Reserved*

So there you are, your own error trapping system. Implement the routines in this column in your next program, especially if it involves some input from the user. You never know what the crazy kids will type in next, do you?



Avoid the kind of errors that lead to THIS!

Write Stuff

If you have any other AMOS programs or queries about AMOS, then please write to the usual address, which is: Phil South, Amos Column, Amiga Computing, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP.

Please send routines on an Amiga disk with notes on how the program works on paper, not as text files on the disk. Make the routines short enough to appear in print, i.e. no more than about 30-40 lines of code.

If possible make them use no external graphics, or if they can't be used without them then be sure to provide them on the disk in native IFF format, and the same goes for sound files. Follow these guidelines and publication will be more or less assured... More or less.

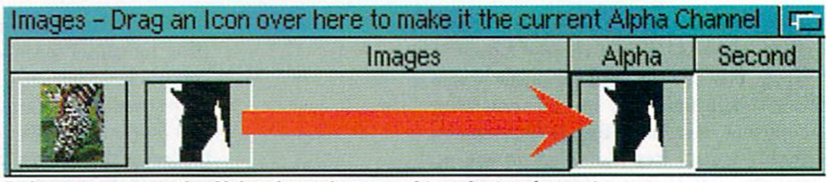
Neil Mohr helps you get to grips with Alpha channels



Photogenics Tutorial Part 2

By now you should all be well acquainted with using Photgenics' basic drawing tools and navigating round those menus. So it's time to take a look at the program's Alpha channel – a clever type of filter that allows you to mask out areas of a picture while allowing other areas to be drawn on.

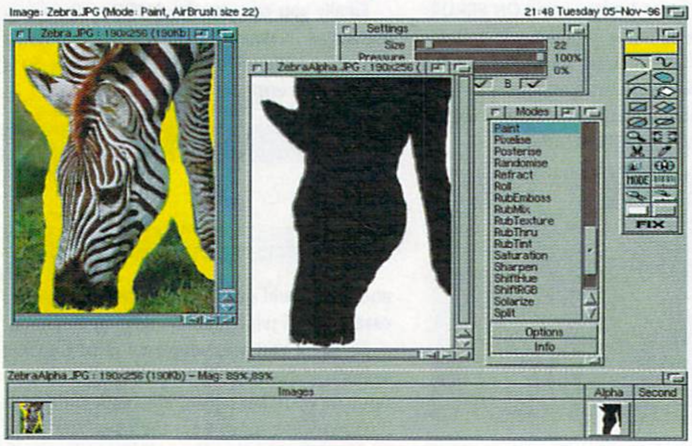
The best way to demonstrate this is wih an example. You should have decompressed the second Photogenics disk, so you should either have the tutorial images on hand on a floppy or



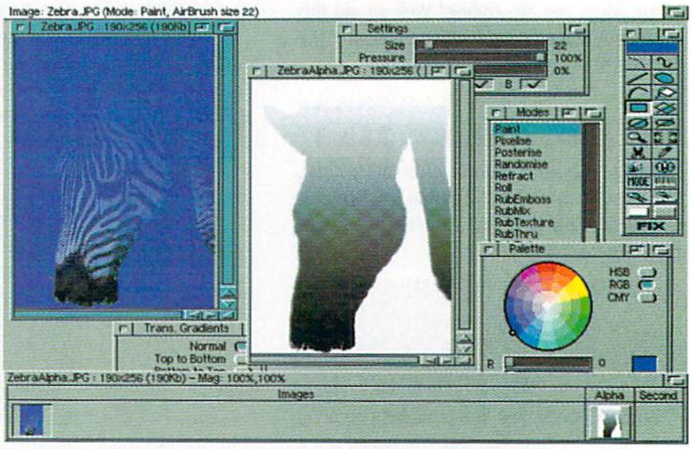
Before you can use the Alpha channel you need to select an image to use by dragging its icon over to the Alpha slot

they will have been copied across to your hard drive along with the Photogenics application and placed in a drawer called graphics.

So select <I>open image<D>, go to the graphics/tutorials drawer, select the Zebra Jpeg and then open the ZebraAlpha Jpeg in the



As the alpha channel has 256 levels you can use it to blend effects onto an image

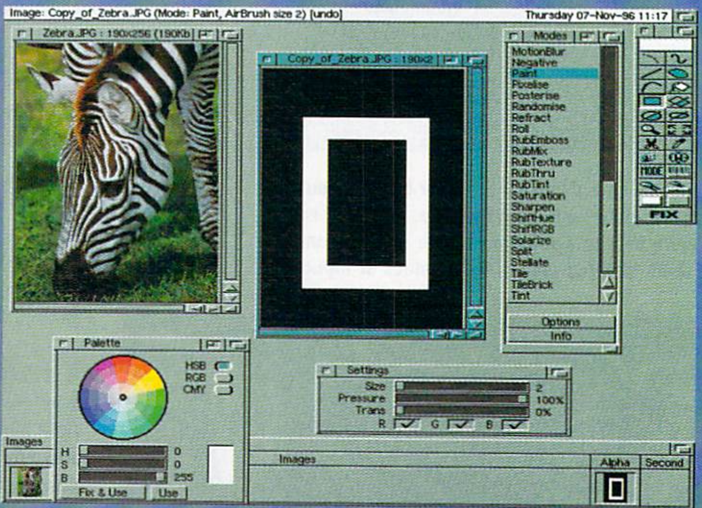


In basic use the Alpha channel is a very good way of protecting part of an image while you work on altering another part of it

FOUR STEPS TO ALPHA CHANNEL HEAVEN



To start load in the Zebra image that you should have in the tutorial drawer and create a identical sized window using the clone function either from the menu or use the short cut. Blank the clone image to black using the fill paint layer tool and fix the changes



Once you have got a duplicate of the Zebra image we are going to draw a simple bevel type box on it using the alpha channel to mask out parts of the Zebra image we do not want to effect. So draw a white box on the alpha and then using the right mouse button draw a smaller box inside this

graphics/alpha clips drawer. By dragging the ZebraAlpha thumbnail image in the icon window, over to the Alpha slot, any effect painted onto a selected image will be applied through the Alpha channel.

If you now fill the original Zebra image – using the fill paint layer tool in the tool bar – the black areas on the Alpha channel are protected from the paint, while all the white areas are painted onto.

You are not restricted to a simple boolean, black and white Alpha channel as Photogenics offers a full 256-level Alpha channel allowing effects to be applied gradually to an image with the minimum of hassle. Using the Zebra image and the Zebra Alpha, apply a gradual white to black gradient onto the Zebra Alpha using the transparency gradient window. Now when you paint on the original Zebra picture you will see that the cyellow gradually fades along with the Alpha channel.

TINY TIPS

***Flushlibs** – For people who need to grab a few extra k of RAM. If you have the flushlibs command you can save 250k by running it after you have started Photogenics, as all Photogenics paint modes are just Amiga shared libraries. MCP users can use the flush button found in the Workbench about requester*



– If you are using the Newicon system do not forget that Photogenics fully supports it and lets you create icons in many different sizes and any numbers of colours you like. These make it much easier to find the image you want in a full directory

***Windows** – To make sure you do not accidentally spray paint onto an image, when selecting the image's window make sure you click in the border first otherwise you could end up with a big splodge of paint on your paint layer. This is particually important for AGA machines running 256 colour screens when the screen update slows*

SHORT CUTS

One way of getting the most out of a program is regularly to use its keyboard short cuts. Not only does this make a program easier and quicker to use, it lets you get the best out of it. It allows you to concentrate on drawing rather than negotiating menus and requesters with the mouse.

Photogenics comes with a whole myriad of short cuts letting you quickly get to almost every function or window. A few shortcuts can be found on the Amiga menus but many are hidden. The following list is only partially complete, as many shortcuts actually have a second function that is engaged by holding the shift key.

For instance the rectangle and many other draw tools have two modes, empty and filled. Holding shift and the tool hotkey allows you access the fill mode.

One partially useful example of this is the Modes short cut. Pressing 'm' will normally pop up the Modes window but holding shift as well will pop up the options requester for the current mode. This makes doing fine adjustments when applying a paint mode much quicker.

FILE HANDLING

r/Amiga O	Open new file
r/Amiga N	New black page
r/Amiga J	Save Jpeg
r/Amiga S	Save 24bit IFF
r/Amiga P	Print
r/Amiga C	Clone image

WINDOW SHORTCUTS

h	Hide image window
r/Amiga L	Loaders window
r/Amiga A	Savers window
r/Amiga M	Paint modes
r/Amiga T	Tool box
p	Pop Palette window
r/Amiga I	Cords
r/Amiga #	Gradients window
r/Amiga w	Colours window
r/Amiga b	Brush window
r/Amiga g	Brush options

IMAGE MANIPULATION

1	Make image primary
2	Make image secondary
3	Make image alpha
r/Amiga >	Re-scale image
r/Amiga <	Crop image
r/Amiga r	Rotate image
r/Amiga /	Shear image
F10	Ham8 preview

MISCELLANEOUS

i	Invert paint layer
k	Clear paint layer
-	Reduce brush size
=	Increase brush size

TOOL SHORTCUTS

s	Freehand tool
d	Solid draw tool
v	Line tool
f	Fill tool
w	Warp tool
e	Ellipse
r	Rectangle
c	Circle tool
b	Cut tool
,	Pick colour tool
l	Ruler tool
m	Pop modes window
return	Fix paint layer

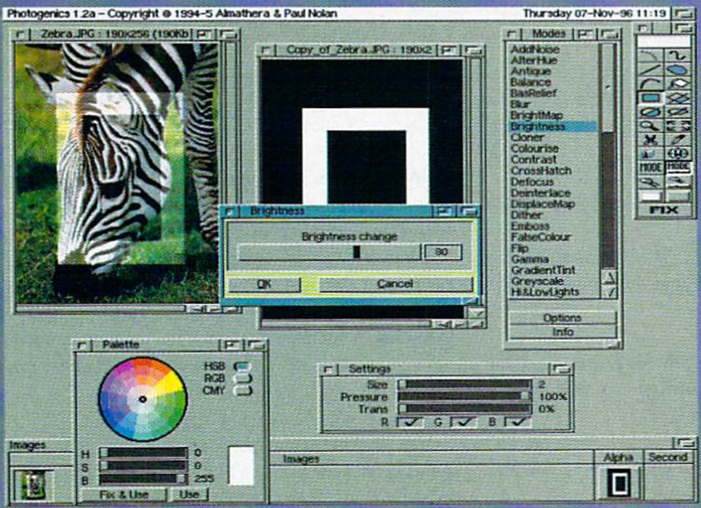
JARGON BOX

Jpeg Joint Photographic Experts Group, the original name of the committee that designed the standard image compression algorithm. JPEG is designed for compressing either full-colour or grey-scale digital images of real-world scenes such as photographs. It does not work so well on images with large areas of the same colour or shade, such as cartoons or line drawings

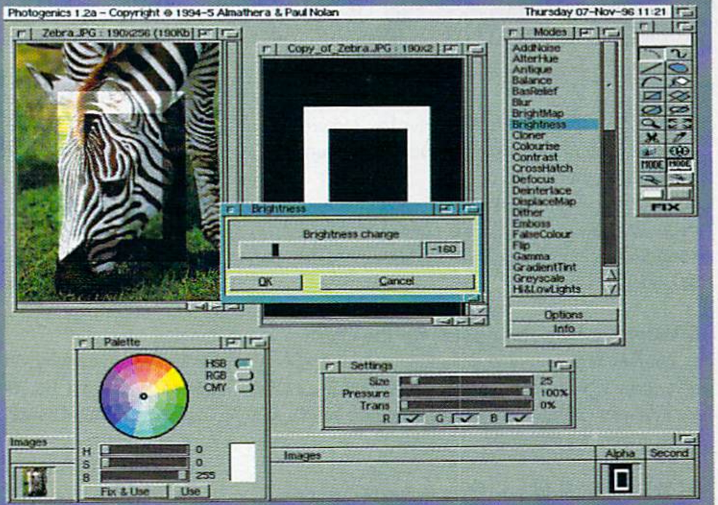
Keyboard short cut A combination of key presses that allow you to access a program's function instead of navigating through the various menus

Library Part of the Amiga operating system, libraries allow AmigaDOS to be extendible, so if you want to add new functions you just add new libraries

NewIcons A replacement icon system for the Amiga. Placing the icon image data in a file's tool types, Newicons provides proper colour mapping of icons to the current screen mode, with little slow down



Fix the box image to the alpha channel and make sure you have dragged the thumbnail of the box over to the alpha section in the image window. Now select the Zebra image, use the fill paint layer tool and select the Brightness paint mode, press shift-M adjust the brightness to 80 and fix these changes to the Zebra image. You should now have the outline of a bright box



Again use the fill paint layer tool on the Zebra image, adjust the brightness to minus 160. You will now have to remove paint from the top left of the image using the right mouse button to make up the dark section of the bevel, the fill polygon tool is the best to use here, and that's it. Not the most inspiring example but it shows how you can manipulate the alpha channels

Paul Austin looks behind the hype as Lightwave 5.0 gets ready to make its debut

3D graphics

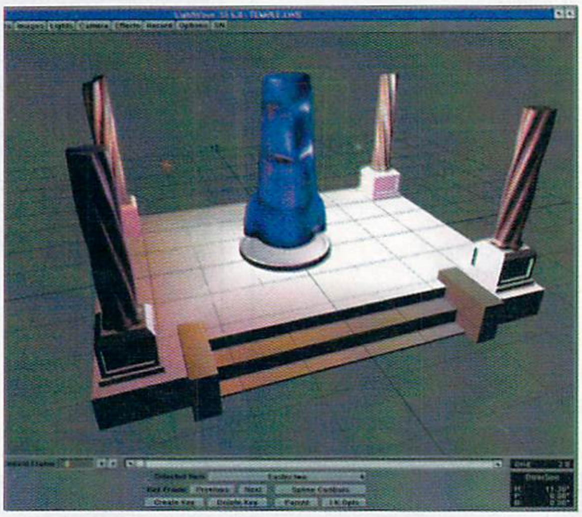
Another upgrade or the beginning of the end?

Over recent years Lightwave and, to a lesser extent, the Amiga has made a name in serious 3D with award winning productions such Beyond Babylon 5, Star Trek, GoldenEye, SeeQuest among countless others.

Unfortunately it would seem the partnership is heading for a break-up as Lightwave marches on via an assortment of Pentiums, Unix boxes and Alphas, and soon even the all-powerful Power Mac will get its own incarnation of the Amiga classic.

With this kind of opposition, and an abject lack of development on the Amiga, it's probably only a matter of time before the Amiga version disappears from the NewTek product line.

It's true that the Amiga still has a place at the NewTek table courtesy of the Toaster and the Flyer. But realistically it won't be long before the Toaster appears on the PC. Put simply, Amiga hardware, as it stands, simply can't compete with the performance on offer from the opposition. And it's pretty obvious from their comments where NewTek expect their long-term revenue streams to come from.



Inside version 5.0

With OpenGL not an option on the Amiga the key selling points for Lightwave version 5 has to be MetaNurbs and MetaBalls. Even Lightwave's shipping date was a tad optimistic, so I'm afraid it's a case of good old fashioned plagiarism from the press release.

New MetaNurbs Modeling

LightWave 3D is the only product to break the polygon/spline barrier with the introduction of MetaNurbSTM;. MetaNurbs performs real time transformations between polygons and splines, enhancing the user's ability to create organic (smooth flowing) 3D objects. Polygons are easier to use than splines but make it difficult to achieve certain looks. Splines, though a more complicated approach to modelling, are a more powerful modelling technique. MetaNurbs is the first tool to effectively utilise the strengths of both techniques making it easier than ever to create stunning 3D models.

MetaBalls Modelling

With MetaBalls, another powerful modelling feature, spheres can be utilised to quickly approximate complex shapes. The MetaBalls function automatically generates a skin based upon that approximation that will transform the rough shape into a complex 3D model. This is particularly effective when creating animals and characters.

In addition to the implementation, MetaNurbs, and MetaBalls, LightWave 3D 5.0 also boasts over 100 new features and enhancements. All very tempting, but to be honest much more attractive to as an upgrade than a first time buyer. US list price for LightWave 3D 5.0 upgrade is $495. The complete system is priced at $1,495.

From the horse's mouth

Assorted quotes from NewTek Q&A session

"LightWave 3D 5.0 introduces the key feature of an OpenGL® implementation. OpenGL tremendously enhances the user's
ability to meet the need of projects where success is dependent upon realistic animation, such as James Bond's GoldenEye, Babylon 5, Space: Above and Beyond, and Star Trek."

Q:What are NewTek's plans for the Flyer?
A: NewTek are continuing development on a future version of the Flyer for Amiga. Non-linear editing and disk recording functionality will also be a part of the new Video Toaster for Windows.

Q: Why is LightWave 3D 4.0 for the Amiga so much more sluggish than version 3.5?
A: Unfortunately much of the software and hardware technology available for the Amiga is not current with capabilities on other platforms. For instance, development tools for the Amiga have not been updated for some time. This has caused several difficulties in NewTek's continued support for this platform.

Q: When do you expect to release the Video Toaster for Windows?
A: NewTek are continuing development of this product which is expected to ship during the first half of 1997.

Q: Is there an upgrade path for Video Toaster users running on the Amiga to the Video Toaster for Windows?
A: We have always been committed to helping our end users to new products. The new Video Toaster will also include an aggressive upgrade program.

Q: What are NewTek's plans for the Flyer?
A: We are continuing development on a future version of the Flyer for Amiga. Non-linear editing and disk recording functionality will also be a part of the new Video Toaster for Windows.

Q: What is the current status on the Amiga and how has it effected your market?
A: Amiga Technologies are in the process of being acquired by VIScorp. The bankruptcy of Escom has set this process back but VIScorp are committed to completing this acquisition as soon as possible. With their loyal following of Amiga users, NewTek's Amiga products have continued to sell well, even in the midst of this market turmoil.

Hardly what could be described as a reassuring read. But to be honest, you can't blame NewTek for moving with the times. It would appear that the only thing t hat can maintain the Amiga's position as a 3D specialist will be some sort of dramatic action from its new owners.

Unlikely bedfellows we know. There really is a sound connection, Paul Overaa explains...

music

Music, the Amiga and... Unix

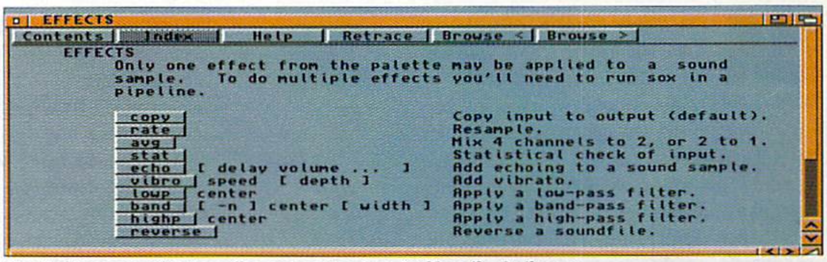
Someone wrote to me a while ago asking why some authors of pd/shareware Amiga music programs occasionally seem to provide facilities that are apparently of no use whatsoever to the Amiga community in general. Often the reason is that the utility was not actually written with the Amiga in mind – but has been ported to the Amiga from some other platform.

One dead giveaway occurs when you start seeing references in the documentation to strange file formats (as used on Sun workstations, DEC machines or other heavyweight system references). Often, once you've read the documentation, you'll find that the program did, in fact, start life running under the Unix O/S (operating system).

Unix is in fact the O/S of choice on many large multi-user systems and it has a particularly strong following among academic and research institutions around the world. Most universities, for example, have sites which run under Unix and nowadays there is an amazing amount of freely distributable software available from this platform.

Now while programs written to run on high-powered mainframes etc., might at first sight appear to have little relevance to either the Amiga or music, in reality nothing could be further from the truth. There are a great many freely distributable music programs floating around among Unix users and, because many are written in the C programming language and use simple command-line style arrangements for their input and output (rather than fancy gadget/menu based interfaces), they are often relatively easy to port, not only to the Amiga, but to many other computer environments as well.

So what happens as Amiga coders come across Unix music programs that look as though they might be useful is that the source code gets downloaded to the Amiga and then, perhaps after a few modifications, recompiled to run as an Amiga Shell utility. Once it has proved useful, someone will often then come along and write a program which provides an 'Amigatised', easy-to-use, front end for the utility. Bingo – another 'Amiga music program' becomes available!



SoxGui has a useful docs file and so too has AmiSox (including an amiga-guide help file). Some of the technical details provided with the latter program however will probably scare the hell out of you!

AmiSox and SoxGui

The reason I've mentioned this Unix connection is that there's been some interest of late in an Amiga sound sample conversion program called AmiSox which provides all manner of strange sampled sound conversion facilities. As you've now probably realised, AmiSox is just one of those programs that didn't really start life on the Amiga at all – it's the Amiga Shell version port of a Unix program called Sox (which stands for SOund eXchange). Needless to say coming from such an environment it can work with a far more exotic range of sample formats than you normally find in the world of the Amiga. Currently a number formats well known to Amiga users are supported, namely Amiga 8SVX, AIFF, raw, and Window WAV and SoundBlaster VOC files. But in addition to this the program can handle such things as... Window's RIFF files, IRCAM Sound Files, SPARC .AU, Mac HCOM, PC/DOS .SOU, Sndtool, Sounder, NeXT .SND, Turtle Beach Sample Vision, and CD-R files!

And as well as copying and translating files AmiSox can also apply various effects to a sample. Rate alteration, signal averaging and sample reversal, echo, a 'vibro' effect (which adds the famous but somewhat dated Fender Vibro-Champ sound effect to a sample), low/high and band pass filtering. You can also byte swap 16 and 32-bit sample data (necessary when using samples created on some other machines like PCs).

AmiSox can, in fact, even statistically examine your sample data! So, the Amiga version of Sox is in fact an extremely powerful piece of software for sound sample conversion.

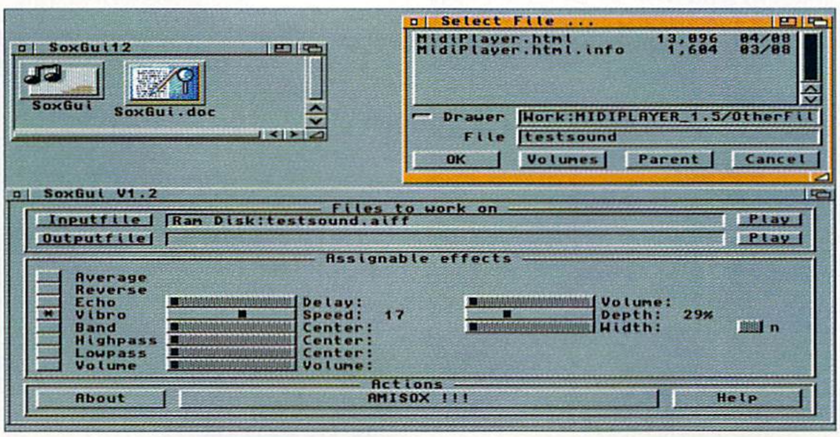
Now while all this may sound great there is one difficulty as far as most users are concerned – AmiSox, like the original Sox utility, uses a Unix-like command line interface which makes it a bit of a nightmare to use.

This is where SoxGui enters the scene. It's a graphical user interface for AmiSox that has been written by Stephan Klein and allows less experienced Amiga users to access the most useful features and functions of AmiSox just by clicking with the mouse.

Now I'm not going to say that SoxGui is stunning because it isn't – it was just a front end churned out quickly in order to make the underlying AmiSox facilities accessible to a wider audience.

In this respect it does its job well enough so, if you like the idea of being able to perform some rather more esoteric sound sample format conversions than most common Amiga utilities can handle, the AmiSox/SoxGui combination might well provide the solution.

I believe, incidentally, that both programs first appeared on Aminet although by now they should be obtainable from most of the larger Amiga pd/shareware libraries including SeaSoft Computing (tel: 01903 850378) and from this source they'll cost you just £1.50 (plus 75p p&p).



The SoxGui interface certainly takes a lot of the hassle out of using AmiSox

Paul Overaa delivers some help in using function keys

ARexx At The Touch Of A Key

Most ARexx users have at least some standalone scripts they use via a Shell window with the rx command and we regularly get queries about the changes needed in order for such scripts to run via a function key. Function keys have quite a lot going for them because, unlike icons on a crowded Workbench display, they are always visible and therefore particularly fast to use.

As far as the conversion issues are concerned, such matters have been briefly mentioned before (in the August issue last year when I dealt with the listing of public ports). This month I thought we'd go the whole hog, take a dead easy example and explain from first principles why things go wrong and the fixes required.

The snags always concern I/O (input/output) operations. Most commonly, somewhere along the line, the ARexx's Say command gets used to deliver output and/or Pull gets used to collect user-typed text. Unfortunately Say always sends any text back to the Shell window the script was started from and Pull expects to collect its input from that same source. The difficulty when scripts run from a function key is that there is no window available!

To put matters right, scripts have to open their own windows and a typical Open() call will use a specification something like this...

```
call Open(window,'con:0/200/640/300/F4..
Somename/close')
```

In this context the Open() function is being used to open an AmigaDOS console device window which provides buffered keyboard and screen i/o (keyboard input being held back, as with a conventional Shell window, until the return key is pressed).

The window's location, size and name incidentally are specified as part of the string following the 'con:' device name. The original format was x/y/width/height/title but, since Release 2 of the O/S additional extension, keywords have been allowed including 'close' which adds a close gadget to the console window.

You can, by using 'window' and 'screen' extensions, cause console output to appear on an existing window (it's address must be provided) or have the console window appear on a named public screen. You can also prevent the window from opening unless any I/O occurs by using an 'auto' keyword.

For the present job however, a simple Shell style console window will suffice and to get text output displayed in such a window, Writeln() – or its character equivalent Writech() – rather than Say needs to be used. In other words, rather than opting for this type of statement:

```
say sometext$

it's necessary instead to use:

call Writeln(window,sometext$)
```

Similarly keyboard input requires the use of Readln() or Readch(). Essentially all you need do to get a script into function key runable form is make sure you have a window available for displaying output and ensure all Say/Pull references are replaced with equivalent file-oriented I/O routines. This sounds simple enough in principle but the easiest way to gets to grips with the idea is to see a typical example.

Keeping it simple

Take a look at the script in listing 1. We display some prompt text, collect the input typed by the user and print it to the screen. As scripts go, it couldn't be simpler but tied to a function key, you now know that this script will not work.

Add an output window and replace the Say and Pull commands to produce the version shown in listing 2 and all is well. Notice that Readch() has been used at the end of the second script - it's purpose is to provide a temporary halt since, without it, the window would automatically close as the script terminated.

In addition to writing suitable scripts you have to get them attached to chosen function keys. Nowadays the Workbench FKey utility is used for setting up function key definitions and it couldn't be easier: Select the New Key gadget and enter the name of the function key (F1, F2 and so on). Choose 'Run ARexx Script' from the command box and enter the name of the script to be run. Finally use the 'Save Defined Keys' Project menu option to save the created function key definition to disk.

It's a good idea when naming these scripts to include both the name of the key and a .rexx extension. For the F4 key you could use 'F4.rexx.' It's also best to save your scripts in the rexx: directory (usually assigned to Workbench:s) and they'll always be found by the system.

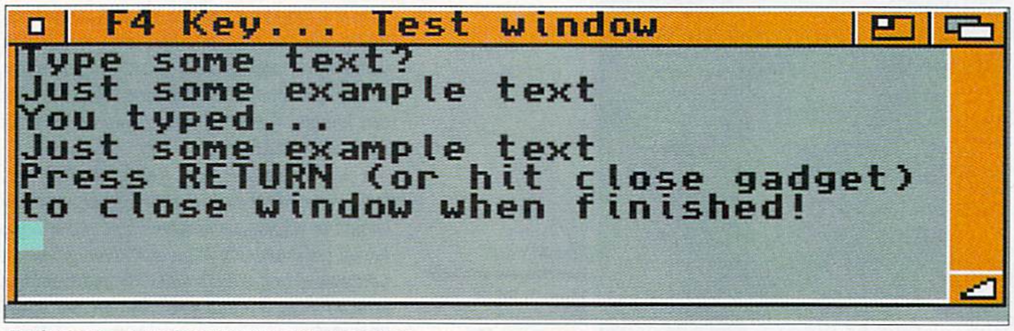
Note that for function definitions to be active the FKey commodity needs to be running. The easiest way of ensuring this is to drag the FKey icon into the WBStartup drawer – that way all definitions are automatically available by the time your system has booted!

```
/* FaultyF4.rexx */
TEXT1='Type some text? '
TEXT2='You typed...'
say TEXT1
pull text$
say TEXT2
say text$
```

Listing 1: Sure looks simple enough – but it's 'no go' for function key use!

```
/* F4.rexx */
LF='0A'x
TEXT1='Type some text? '
TEXT2='You typed...'
TEXT3='Press RETURN (or hit close
gadget)'||LF||,
'to close window when finished!'
WINDOW_DEF='con:100/200/400/200/F4 Key... Test
window/close'
call Open(window,WINDOW_DEF)
call Writeln(window,TEXT1)
text$=Readln(window)
call Writeln(window,TEXT2)
call Writeln(window,text$)
call Writeln(window,TEXT3)
readch(window,1)
```

Listing 2: The script that does work when tied to a function key



Typical output produced by the listing 2 script

Dave Cusick takes a closer look at Usenet

comms

And now, the news

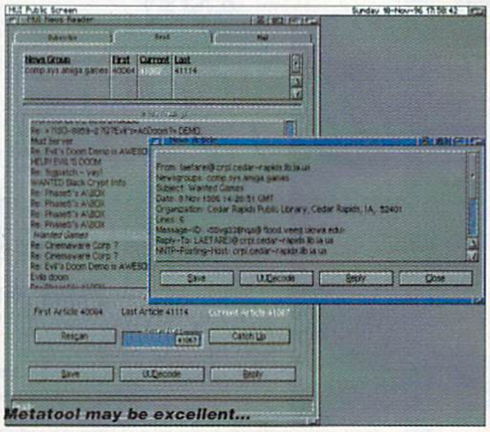
Ask about decent newsreaders on certain IRC channels and you will be bombarded with replies such as "Trevor MacDonald" and "Martyn Lewis". Of course, the regulars will know precisely what you mean and their responses are simply poor attempts at jokes, but this illustrates the fairly dismissive attitude many Internet users have towards newsgroups in general.

Perhaps the reason many Net junkies choose to ignore newsgroups is that when the media talk about the Internet being flooded with pornography, what they are actually referring to is not (as they would have you believe) the World Wide Web – which for the most part only contains material you could find in any top shelf magazine. They mean certain Usenet newsgroups, which are where the really offensive stuff gets circulated.

This doesn't mean, of course, that all Usenet is the domain of sad, lonely perverts and is therefore best left alone by the vast majority of perfectly ordinary Net users. On the contrary; the newsgroups offer something for everybody.

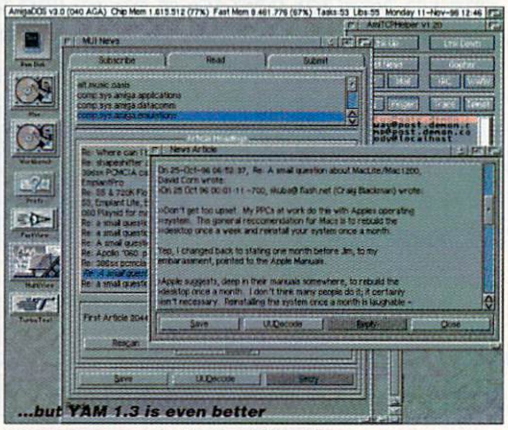
For those who have never ventured into Usenet before, newsgroups are essentially discussions which can be about anything and everything under the sun, but are generally confined to specific topics identified by the name of the particular newsgroup. Unlike IRC, these discussions do not take place in real time. As with e-mail, many news programs allow you to read and compose news articles off-line rather than having to do everything while your telephone bill mounts.

To access the newsgroups you will therefore need a decent newsreader – hence the somewhat convoluted introduction to this very column. As I outlined a couple of issues ago in an overview of essential Net software, while some browsers such as AMosaic and Voyager can handle news, probably the best option (if you have an Amiga with plenty of memory) is to get hold of a dedicated news client such as MNews. Version 1.0beta is currently available from Aminet as comms/news/mNews1_0b.lha.



Metatool may be excellent...

MNews requires plenty of free memory but it has loads of useful features...



...but YAM 1.3 is even better

If you play around with the MUI settings it can look really attractive too

MNews, as you might suspect, requires the magnificent Magic User Interface. Assuming you have MUI already set up, installing MNews is simply a matter of dearchiving it to an appropriate directory on your hard drive. The first time you run the program, you will have to enter some simple details about your news server (your ISP will be able to tell you this), your real name and user name and the text editor you will be using to compose news articles.

The next step is to go on-line. Then you can either enter the name of a newsgroup you want to take a look at, or simply scan the newsgroups list for ones of interest. Scanning may take some time because of the sheer number of newsgroups that are out there.

Most ISPs do not carry every single newsgroup, partly because there are so many in existence their machines would be straining to cope with the sheer volume of news articles and partly because certain offensive newsgroups are censored. However, even if your ISP does censor some newsgroups, you could be waiting around for a few minutes at this stage. Fire up a browser, check your mail, or indulge in some IRC conversation whilst you are waiting. You will only have to do this once.

When MNews has finished listing the hundreds (or thousands) of newsgroups available, you can select those which interest you and "subscribe" to them. To begin with it is not a good idea to subscribe to too many newsgroups, you could find the volume of articles in those groups keeps you waiting for several minutes whenever you wish to check news articles in the future. Try selecting four or five groups on subjects which interest you the most.

Amiga related newsgroups are to be found under comp.sys.amiga.* (hence the CSA abbreviation you may have come across to credit news sources on some Web pages). You might want to bob in and see how confusing things are on the other side of the fence at comp.sys.ibm.pc.hardware.chips.

Recreational topics are to be found under rec.* so for instance football fans might want to investigate rec.sports.soccer. Another interesting area is the Alternate section, which contains everything from alt.tv.simpsons to alt.music.oasis.

When you get to know some newsgroups well, you will find Usenet can have the same addictive qualities as IRC. Computer related newsgroups are an excellent source of help if you are experiencing hardware or software difficulties, while the hobby-related groups can be hugely entertaining.

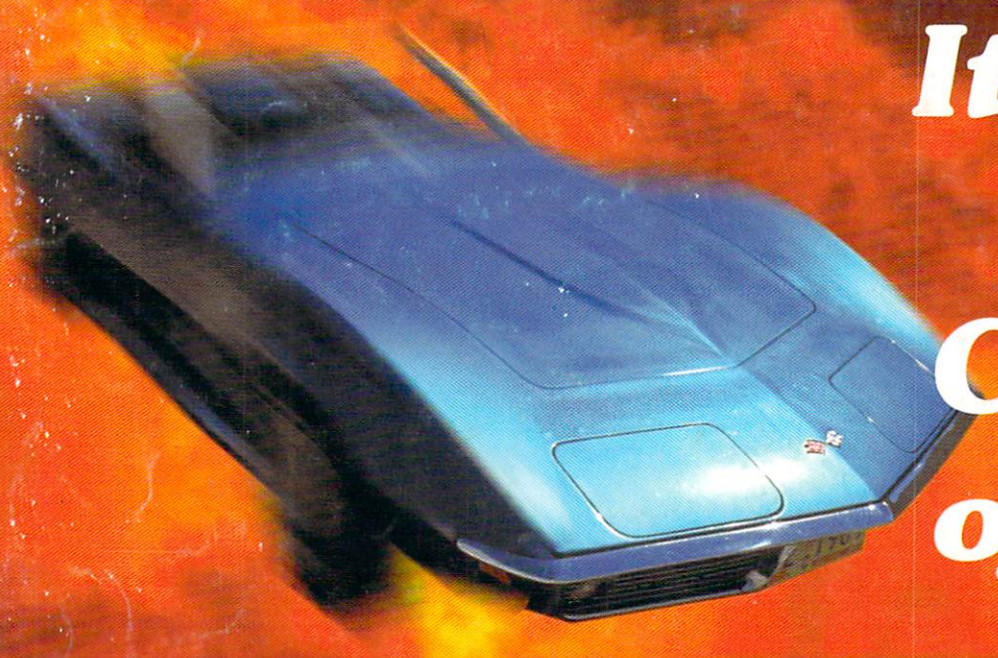
Netiquette

It is generally considered good netiquette to read articles in any given newsgroup for a couple of weeks before posting your own messages, so as to gain a good feel for the appropriate subject matter and tone. Strictly speaking this shouldn't be necessary as long as you are polite, but it is important that you do not just waltz into a newsgroup and start asking questions that have been asked a thousand times before.

Many newsgroups have their own FAQs (answers to Frequently Asked Questions) which are either found on Web pages or are periodically posted to the newsgroup for the benefit of newcomers. Taking a look at these before posting to a newsgroup can help you avoid being the victim of flames from Net snobs.

Contact

If you wish to contact me, my e-mail address is dave@dcus.demon.co.uk. Questions, suggestions and feedback are all more than welcome. I also have a homepage, which is now at http://www.dcus.demon.co.uk/.



It's Time for a Change of Gear

Cinema4D Ver 3

Cinema4D 3 is a major upgrade to this easy-to-use and extremely powerful graphics package - the changes increase the functionality and speed of the package to an extremely high level, while the price remains truly affordable.

Some of the features of Cinema4D version 3 are:

- The major internal workings of Cinema4D have been optimised resulting in a substantial increase in speed - many raytracing operations are now up to 30 times faster than before.
- The package has support for many new output file formats including Windows BMP, TIFF and JPEG.
- Lens flares are implemented; this is like looking at a bright light source through a camera which creates realistic camera special effects. The lens flare is actually a light source in itself which allows some great-looking effects to be achieved. A simple lens flare preview is available.
- There are many other light source additions and additional effects such as lens glows, lens reflections, effects at margins and randomising of rays.
- Additional CyberGraphX support - now allows full 24-bit colour rendering.
- Extended user interface.
- Cinema4D requires 3Mb RAM, OS2.x, a hard drive and is fully multi-tasking and extremely configurable.

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MediaMagic is a superb new product for designing and playing quality presentations on your Amiga, at the right price.

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- Working with animations is easy with MediaMagic's support for IFF animations in Anim5, Anim7 and Anim8 formats.
- Business charts can be created directly in the program.
- OS 2.x and OS 3.x compatible , simple controls, fully multitasking.
- Requires 2Mb RAM, OS2.x up and hard disk recommended.

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DiskMagic is the friendliest file manager on the Amiga and now version 2 takes this fine product to new heights of useability and functionality - probably the easiest-to-use and most versatile file management utility on the Amiga. Here's some of the things that you can expect:

- Support for LZX archive format, the new standard in Amiga compression.
- Many new functions including: super-fast delete command, extra filetype options, additional ARexx commands and internal functions.
- New output window preference.
- File encryption.

DiskMagic 2 comes complete with a library of icons for gadgets and a comprehensive user manual.

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HiSoft C++

At long last there is a new, and extremely powerful, C compiler for the Amiga, at the right price. HiSoft C++ has two versions, Developer and Lite; here's a brief list of features:

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- The Editor uses multi-windows, is syntax-sensitive, handles as many files as you like, includes an ARexx interface and supports full keyboard shortcuts.
- The C/C++ Debugger (Developer only) uses multi-windows, with drag-and-drop technology, allows breakpoints, variable tracking and much more.
- The Devpac 3 Assembler is included for low-level work.
- The Easy Object Library (Developer only) is included which eases resource handling and use of data structures (lists, large arrays etc.), along with BOOPSI support, error handling with exceptions and online documentation.
- The Hot Help (Developer only) system can be activated at any time and gives you full, expandable online help even with an ARexx port.

HiSoft C++ requires 4Mb RAM, OS2.x up and a hard disk.

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